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THE SPHERE

Vol. CLXIV No. 2137 WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE GRAPHIC JANUARY 4 1941

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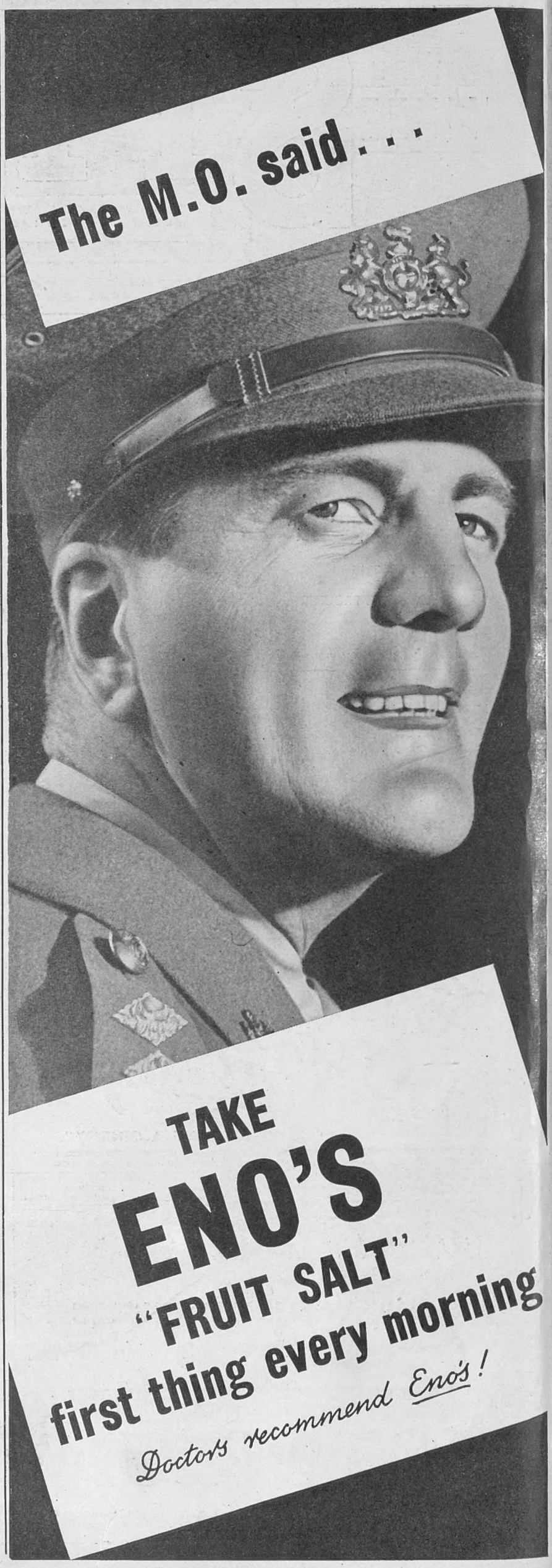

THE SPHERE
With which is incorporated "THE GRAPHIC"
The Empire's Illustrated Weekly
London, January 4, 1941

RINGED IN BY A CIRCLE OF FIRE: ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL IN THE MIDST OF THE BLAZING CITY, SUNDAY NIGHT, DECEMBER 29

On Sunday night, in the words of the official communiqué, the enemy made a deliberate attempt to set fire to the City of London. In the early hours of the evening thousands of incendiary bombs were dropped over the historic area known as the City. Dramatic damage was done within the Corporation's area, the Guildhall itself not escaping. The pall of smoke over Central London reflected the blazing fires below, and lit up the surrounding districts. Perhaps the most astonishing sight of this astounding night was the vision of the dome and drum of St. Paul's Cathedral bearing aloft the great gilded cross, the whole upper part of the building lit by a circle of fires. Owing to the fact that the Cathedral possesses one of the most efficient A.R.P. services in London, the incendiaries which actually fell on the roofs were quickly dealt with and no actual damage was sustained by the great fabric —a seeming miracle when one viewed the Cathedral from such a point as shown above. Ten incendiary bombs in all fell on the Cathedral roofs during the raid. All were promptly tackled by the staff, owing to the presence of four special watchers stationed round the great drum under the dome. These watchers telephoned to each special section as they saw bombs drop, enabling the appropriate fire squad to locate the bomb before it could do any damage. The watchers are volunteers, chiefly architects, and professional men who have a love for the great building. On Sunday, those off duty rushed back to their usual posts in order that the staff might be augmented

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A WAR NEWSLETTER—No. 70

32-34, ST. BRIDE STREET, E.C.4

CHRISTMAS ARMISTICE.

—I felt certain there would be a Christmas armistice from night bombing in the west—whatever the leaders said or did not say. There was. As at Christmas 1914 in the trenches of France and Flanders, so at Christmas 1940, over the ravaged cities of Britain and Germany, there was no death in the air during two or three nights. All over Europe little children were allowed to sleep and to dream of the bulging stockings placed at their feet as they lay in bunks, cots or beds or on the ground; there was no killing or mutilating of babies, no destruction of works of art and other treasures. Why was this? It is no use putting it on the weather. It was still, dark, misty, but perfectly "bombable," if there had been the will to bomb. But that will was lacking. For nearly forty-eight hours the monstrous, imbecile, filthy business on which so many of the flower of Europe are now engaged nightly, was suspended. The warring leaders waited on each other, each welcoming and fearing the respite. The young men who execute the orders given them (of grim necessity or in macabre deliberation) held their hands, and innocent sleep was not disturbed. The High Commands know the dangers of these armistices. If the combatants once pause to ask themselves what they are doing and why they are suffering and giving their lives in waterlogged trenches or icy sap-heads, and why they are slinging bombs at people for whom, after all, they do not feel any personal loathing—well, the resumption of good, energetic hostilities is a bit of a wrench, and the desired tempo may be harder to restore. And when war requires the bombing to death of babies and old women and the destruction of churches, nunneries and schools, there is a danger that even those who worship at the shrine of the god of Force and have been bred from the cradle to ruthlessness in war and in peace, may ask themselves if this method of warfare on children is not a little undignified for the beau ideal of the ruthless, juggernaut warrior. . . . Thinking is dangerous. Soldiers must obey: "You are not paid to think," as the sergeant says, in duty bound. No. Such armistices are very, very dangerous. Let the Nazi airman or soldier or sailor *once pause* to ask himself what he, his family, his country, has gained and will gain from his leader's resounding conquests of Europe . . . and the Nazi fat will be in the fire indeed.

SO TO 1941.

—Another year of our life and history comes in, mortgaged to war, with entire nations under arms and under fire, and underground, men, women and children. That is a commonplace, just as it is a commonplace that war is the death of all constructive thoughts and efforts in the arts of peace. Great minds are turned to constructing means of destruction and the weapons of war that perish, while the arts and graces and all the heralds and ministers of social progress sleep like the Princess in the Wood, awaiting the touch of the Prince of Peace. Slightly less commonplace and obvious is this reflection and reminder: a man of sixty looks back on his life. (Here is no personal note, for I am not yet sixty.) I have the man in mind. He is a man of peace essentially, a literary man who has written some fine books. He has now reached the end of the "best years" of his literary career. His powers are slightly on the wane. He was born in 1881. In 1899 he felt the call and volunteered for service in South Africa, straight from school. It was not until 1902 that he could resume his education. From 1914 to 1919 he was under arms, mostly in France, Flanders and Germany. In 1939 he was snatched away again from his craft, and put back into uniform. Now it is 1941. Of the forty years of his active career—during which he should have been educating and training himself in his art, and turning out his great books—he has given the best part of ten

MR. ANTHONY EDEN RETURNS TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE: With the appointment of Lord Halifax as Britain's new Ambassador to the United States, following on Lord Lothian's sudden and tragic death, the Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden now returns to the Foreign Office. He is forty-three years of age; in December 1935 he was first appointed to this post, succeeding Sir Samuel Hoare when the latter resigned over the question of Sanctions against Italy. In February 1938 Mr. Eden resigned because of Mr. Chamberlain's policy in connection with that same country. Now Mr. Eden has once again taken up the direction of Britain's Foreign Policy

already to fighting—a quarter of his precious ration yielded up to destructive work. And we talk of the literary giants of the Victorian age! Shall we ever again compare the big literary figures of our own day with those of the Victorian age, to the disadvantage of the former? Which could not rise to the stature of a giant given the advantages enjoyed by the literary men, the poets, the statesmen, the painters, the actors, of the Victorian age? Where will Mr. Churchill stand in the eyes of posterity set beside Macaulay, Gladstone, Disraeli, all crammed into one personality? If we make allowance for his handicaps, he should tower above that triple-headed portent, whether as statesman or author. And for the lesser fry, the less versatile, the less energetic, the erudite students of a gentler kind—how much to their advantage should be any comparison between their achievements and those of their Victorian counterparts! We must throw into the scales on their behalf 25 per cent. of their available time lost, 25 per cent. or more of the patronage and interest of their public mortgaged to other affairs, 25 per cent. and more of obstacles of every kind thrown in their path to fame. There will be no giants between 1815 and 1915. The age of giants and heroes ceased during that hundred-year period. It is grand to have lived in an age of heroes and giants, as we have; and even men of peace would not have it otherwise. But the handicaps remain—and posterity must take note of them.

MY PEACE AIMS.

—I try to be in the fashion and in the van of every movement, as a dutiful and elastic journalist should, and I hope that that crusty old Tory who writes so bitterly to me from East Sussex, when he detects on me the slightest whiff of Socialism, will keep his promise "never to look at the *Newsletter* again after fourteen years of constant reading." The fashion is for stating your peace aims. Here, from my rag-bag, are some of mine:—(1) To banish for ever that dreary, deadly, negroid dyspepsia and cacophony sometimes called crooning, with its rancid melody and imbecile words, that has brought shame, desolation and despondency on our noble race, which Americans themselves have described as a race of heroes. (2) So to re-establish public opinion that it will become impossible for newspapers to continue to maintain certain "class-conscious" Edwardian-age features, such as announcing the birthdays of individuals whose names happen to figure in *Burke*, but who are otherwise (and in all ways) of no importance whatever; or, announcing the names of boys to be confirmed at Eton, but only down to the eldest sons of baronets, but no lower. Eton might help here; and in Heaven I believe the *Table of Precedence* is devised on other standards. (3) To secure by legislation a 36-hour week for broadcasting and flying, in order to conserve the surviving stocks of human sanity and of petrol after the war. (4) To repopulate the countryside without increasing its vulgarisation and spoliation and desecration, and to revive the rural crafts. (5) To control the issue of new novels and new publications, and to restore the lost art of book reviewing. (6) To continue into peace-time the war-time habits of preventing disgusting, senseless waste of usable products in foodstuffs, metals, paper, bones and garden produce. (7) To employ architects for building, trained writers for writing, musicians for composing, painters for painting and experienced people for stockbroking, governing, cooking, housemaiding, and so on. We have had all too much of casual amateurs in all these departments. (8) And ("eighthly or 'h'"), broadly and generally, to *remember* a few at least of the bitter lessons learned from our follies and *hubris* and blindness and laziness in the decades between wars.

TELLING THE WORLD.—

In this war public utterances by statesmen and world leaders are not out of date soon after their delivery. Because they are addressed to the whole world, rather than to one country or section, wise men wait to comment on them until they can appreciate from the world's Press and radio the widest reactions to them. It is therefore not too late to add a note on the speech of Mr. Churchill, addressed primarily to the Italian people, and to the Pope's Christmas message. It is clear that America regarded Mr. Churchill's appeal as a very important diplomatic event. The Axis reactions to it were exactly as were to be expected. In Britain, first reactions were not unanimous. Most people agreed that it required supreme tact to steer between obvious shoals and hidden snags; some thought it as fine as any of the Premier's great war speeches, while others thought it below his high average. But a majority of the nation, I think, was puzzled by the speech and longed ardently to know what secret information regarding the internal state of Italy in the Premier's possession induced him to consider the time apt and the circumstances favourable (or even insistent) to make an appeal to the Italians to throw over Mussolini. If that appeal proved premature, the speech might do more harm than good. If the chosen words proved more wounding to Italian pride than healing to Italian sores, it might have the effect of binding non-Fascist Italy a little closer to Fascism and to Nazism also. As for the Pope's Christmas message, it might have been even shorter, and clearer—and braver. The five points might have been fined down to the one, and still comprehended, word, *Christianity*—a return by those clearly indicated nations and leaders and peoples of the world who have denied Christ directly or vicariously, to the tenets and virtues taught by Christ, covers all the points so elaborately set forth. And, accepting that, one is justified in feeling that the leader of the Roman Catholic faith and the vice-gerent of Christ might have ranged himself on the side of God and not maintained a diplomatic neutrality on the issue of good versus evil and of God versus Satan.

SWOPPING THWARTS.—

There are moments when our conventions as regards the system of political rewards and promotion seem to me dangerous and inept. No better choice for Washington than Lord Halifax could have been made. Public opinion also had come to regard a change at the F.O. as desirable. Mr. Eden has been there before and knows the ropes. Captain Margesson's appointment is another story. No doubt he deserves his reward. He has also put up with a lot of criticism, and much of it unfair. But the War Office is engaged in a life-and-death struggle. A superman must be a cipher for the first three months after taking an important office of State. The next three months may be vital months. There was Mr. Stanley, very popular with the Army and experienced at the War Office. But . . . it was Captain Margesson's turn. Given time, he may, no doubt, prove himself efficient and gain rapid experience. But have we the time for such conventions of peace-time politics? Or does it not matter who "answers for the War Office" in the House?

A PRESENT TO GREECE.

—Mr. Hamilton Fyfe's suggestion made last week that as a token of our gratitude to Greece we should promise to restore to the Parthenon the Elgin Marbles is one which is arresting and deserving of close examination. For 140 years the bulk of those glorious sculptures, which once adorned the Parthenon, have remained in England. Our title to them was a doubtful one at all times. The Lord Elgin who was Ambassador to Turkey in 1801 got leave of the Sultan to remove some unspecified stones and figures from certain semi-ruins in Athens to save details of artistic merit from destruction. Given permission, he shipped them to London, where they have been displayed ever since. It is impossible not to admit that these superb friezes would look better on the Parthenon than in Bloomsbury—once the Parthenon is safe from further destruction. This idea is, in its way, as great as the idea of Daylight Saving or the Unknown Warrior. There is only one answer to it—a sign of a new order in Europe; best of all, a practical proof of improving culture and good taste, and of a sense of gratitude and justice.

THE OLD STAGER

THE GREAT ATTACK ON LONDON BY FIRE BOMBS

On Sunday Night, December 29, in the Early Hours of the Evening, Enemy Planes Dropped Showers of Incendiary Bombs on the Ancient City Portion of London, Causing a Great Conflagration

A LONDON CHURCH SPIRE SILHOUETTED AGAINST THE CHERRY-RED GLOW OVER THE CITY ON SUNDAY NIGHT

When the conflagration was at its height the sky quivered with pulsations of rose-coloured light reflected on the smoke, which hung like a great reflector above. A large number of City churches were set on fire and burned; but, fortunately, the towers have remained standing in many cases. The following City churches received heavy damage : St. Lawrence Jewry ; St. Stephen's, Coleman Street ; St. Vedast's, Foster Lane ; St. Mary, Aldermanbury ; St. Andrew by the Wardrobe, Queen Victoria Street ; St. Anne and St. Agnes, Gresham Street ; Christ Church, Greyfriars (another Wren church) ; and St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard Street

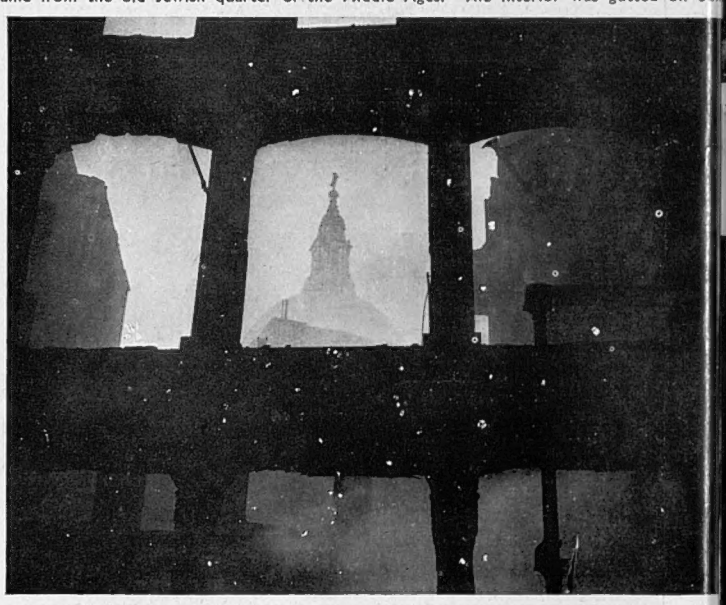
HOW BLAZING BUILDINGS LIT UP SURROUNDING BUILDINGS WHEN FIRES WERE AT THEIR HEIGHT

The early hours of Sunday night (December 29) witnessed a massed attack by German bombing planes which released thousands of incendiary bombs on the City portion of London with the obvious intention of creating a second Fire of London. In this they did not succeed, although they shattered many historic buildings, including the Guildhall. When the fires were at their height the scene was at many points a glowing inferno, but the Fire Brigade tackled fire after fire so effectively that the threat to the City was conquered before the grey light of dawn revealed the shattered walls of the still-smouldering buildings

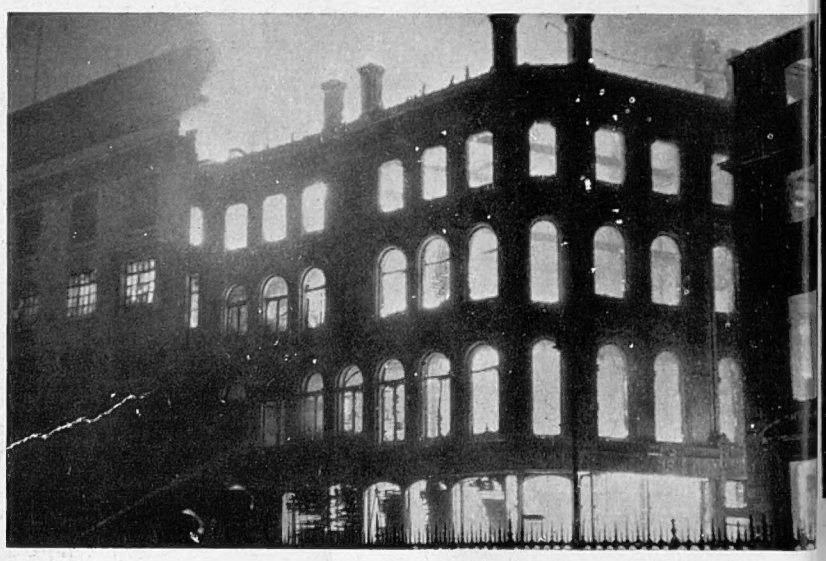
INTERIOR OF THE BEAUTIFUL CHURCH OF ST. BRIDE, FLEET STREET, AS IT NOW IS : The Gothic church of "St. Brigid the Virgin of Fletestrete" was burned down in the Great Fire of London and was rebuilt in 1680. Walls and steeple still stand

THE CHURCH WHICH FLANKED THE ENTRANCE TO GUILDHALL YARD AS IT NOW The church of St. Lawrence Jewry was burned down in 1666 and rebuilt in 1680. It obta its name from the old Jewish quarter of the Middle Ages. The interior was gutted on Su

A COMPLETELY DESTROYED BUILDING IN THE FIRE AREA : This is an example of the complete burning-out of which some buildings give evidence. Partition walls have fallen



THE DOME OF ST. PAUL'S SEEN THROUGH BURNED-OUT BUILDINGS : The d was lit up by the glow of fires when the conflagration was at its height



On left—

HOW CITY PREMISES FARED ON SUNDAY

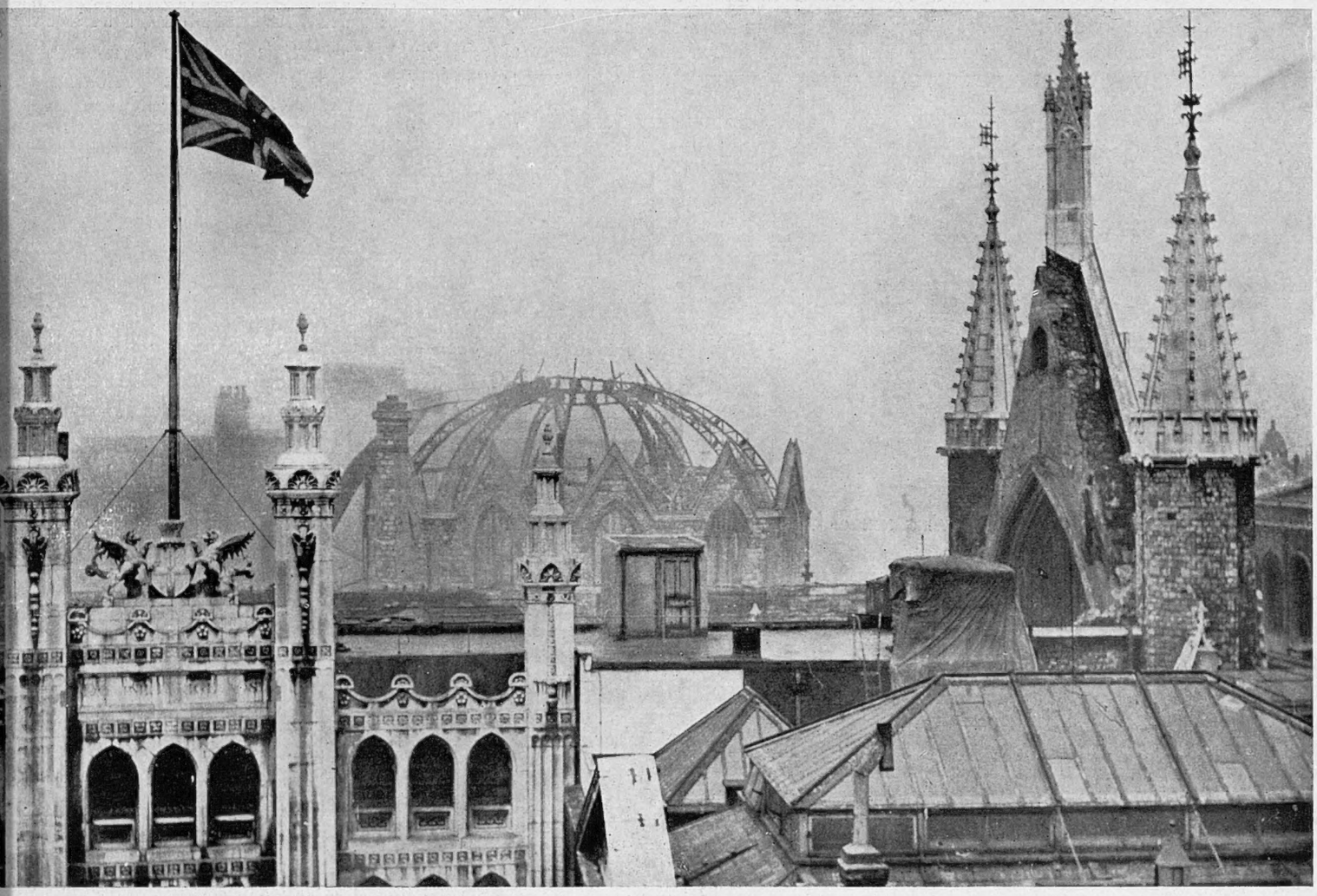
A strong element of luck was evident as one walked down City streets. Some escapes were due to efficient night-watching, and it is evident that the Government takes a serious view of the necessity for constant watching

Above—

FIRE GLOWS THROUGH GAPING WINDO

This was the sight which met the eye during progress of the fire. Hundreds of windows glo cherry-red with internal fires. Guarded build saved themselves and their neighbours f damage; in many cases it was just the rev

THE GUILDHALL AND NINE CHURCHES DESTROYED IN THE CITY



THE UNION JACK STILL FLYING OVER THE REMAINS OF THE HISTORIC GUILDHALL : The great hall of the City Corporation, so famous for its annual banquets, was one of the victims of the Sunday incendiary attack. Its roof has gone (fortunately it only dated from 1870) and the walls are standing, together with the Gothic porch which survived the Great Fire of 1666. Gog and Magog, the two huge figures at the west end, are charred wrecks among the mass of fallen roof timber

ANOTHER BLAZE IN A CITY STREET IN THE EARLY HOURS OF MONDAY MORNING

The great incendiary attack on the City portion of London led to the destruction of a great variety of buildings—no military objectives were anywhere damaged. Historic buildings, great warehouses, and smaller office buildings alike fell victims to the flames; in every part of the attacked areas, the fire-fighters fought valiantly in localising blazes, although Molotof breadbaskets fell crackling through the smoke during the brief but violent attack. There were casualties among these fire-fighting squads whose intrepidity was beyond praise

THE INTERIOR OF THE GUILDHALL AFTER THE FIRE WAS PUT OUT : This view of the interior shows how the walls and some of the monuments (Nelson, Wellington, Chatham and Lord Mayor Beckford) still stand almost intact. About one-third of the walls was pre-Great Fire—one could see the point of junction after the cleaning of the walls a few years ago. The stonework of the big east window which stretched across the width of the hall is practically intact as well as the two pinnacles. Valuable stained glass had already been removed by the Corporation authorities

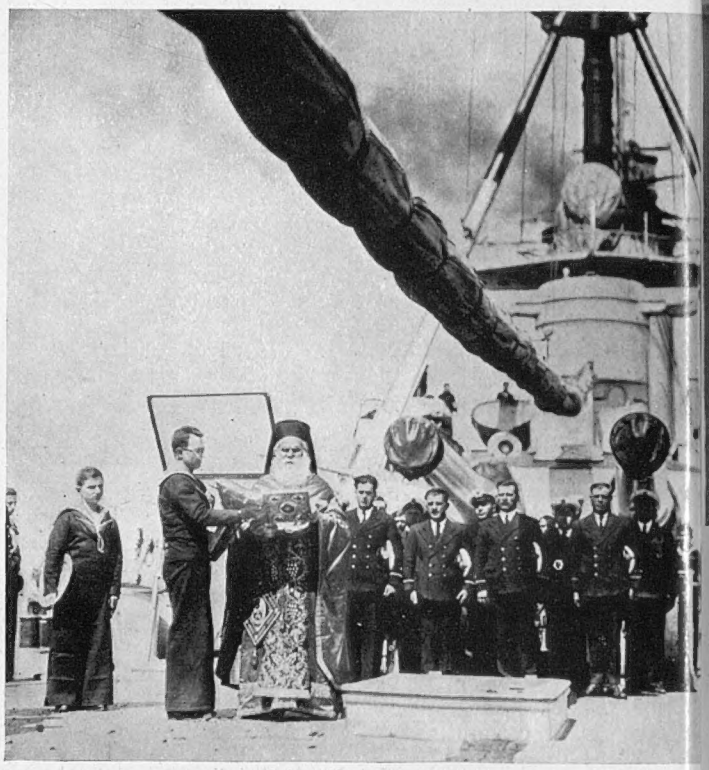
FIRST PICTURES FROM THE GREEK FRONT

Greeks and Britons Side by Side Drive the Italians in Disorder Through Albania

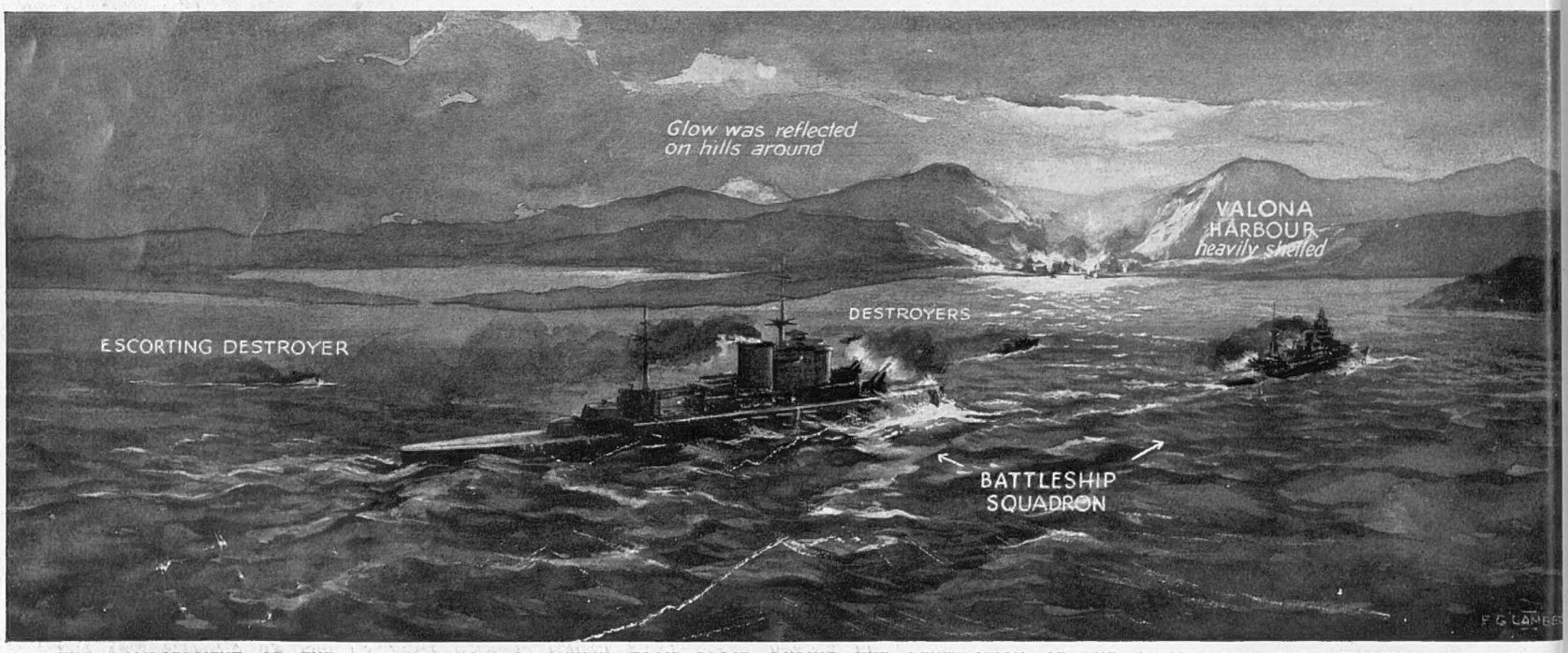
A PICTURE JUST RECEIVED FROM ATHENS, SHOWING MEN OF THE GREEK ARMY ON THEIR WAY TO THE FRONT: Pictures from the Greek front are very difficult to obtain, as the fighting is taking place in such confused and isolated country where communications are not easy. The pictures reproduced on these pages are the latest to be received in London from Athens

THE GREEK PREMIER VISITS THE WOUNDED: General John Metaxas i casualty hospital during a visit he made before Christmas to cheer up the Gr wounded. It is owing to the genius of General Metaxas that the Italian onrush i Albania was stemmed, and then converted into a rout!

THE FIRST WOUNDED SOLDIERS OF THE GREEK ARMY RETURN HOME: These men took part in the fighting on the Pindus front, where great victories were scored over the demoralised Italians. The wounded soldiers were everywhere greeted by the populace with the wildest enthusiasm



ON BOARD THE GREEK BATTLESHIP "AVEROFF": A Service of Thanksgiving commemorate the successes of the Greek Land Forces. The Greek Navy, too—sm as it is—has played a far more valiant part in the present campaign than has the Ital

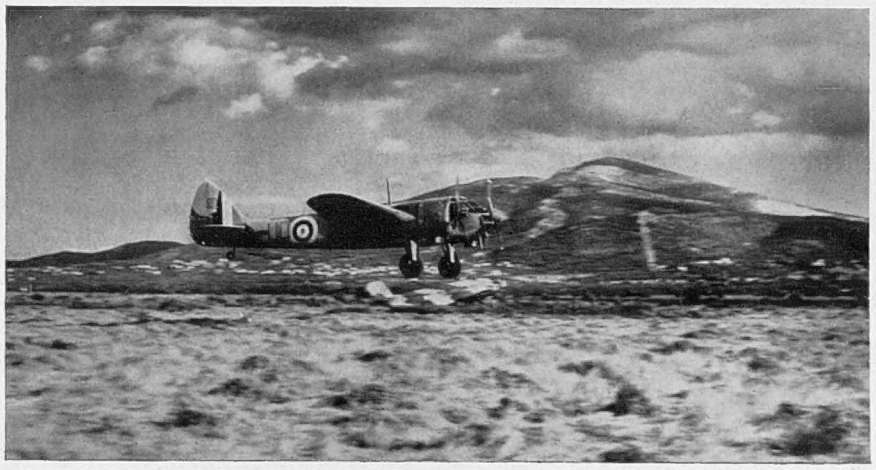


THE BOMBARDMENT OF THE PORT OF VALONA, WHICH TOOK PLACE DURING THE PENETRATION OF THE ADRIATIC BY THE MEDITERRANEAN FLEET

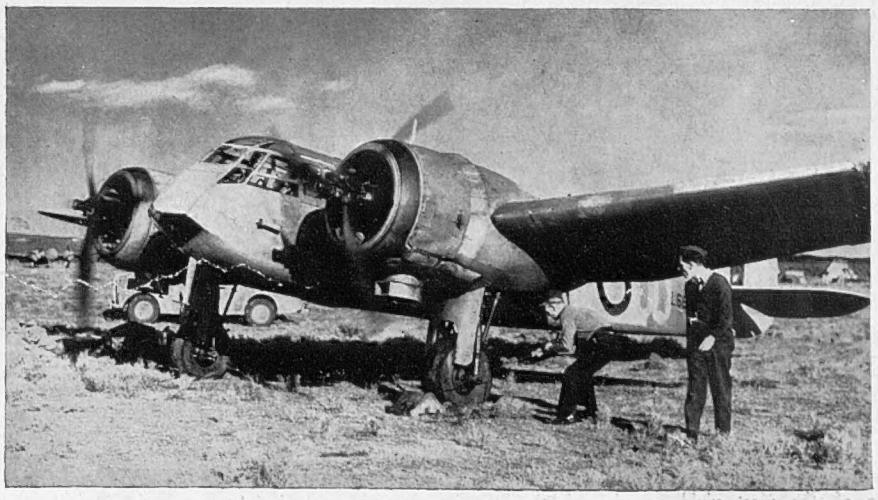
The most impressive action of the British naval forces in the Mediterranean during the closing days of the old year was the penetration of the southern portion of the Adriatic and the bombardment of Valona, which formed part of this manifestation of naval mastery. The weather had been peculiarly foul during the earlier part of the wide patrol which this particular force had undertaken before turning into the Adriatic. No sign of the Italian Fleet was evident as the battleships, cruisers and attendant destroyers steamed through the narrow entrance to the Adriatic, flanked by the heel of Italy on the west and Corfu on the east. Fortunately, as the Fleet proceeded northward the weather conditions improved; then the vessels again turned southwards and came abreast of the entrance to Valona's land-locked harbour. With moonlight breaki through the clouds, the Fleet moved in near enough to get a good view of the little po of Skaia which had been used by the Italians as a supply base during the present operatio There the Italians had massed munitions, oil, transport, planes, and men to reinforce th Southern armies. One battleship hurled fifty-four 15-in. shells, each weighing a ton, over the 2,500-f high neck of land that hid them from their target. Another battleship fired as many more, so Ska in the space of 15 minutes, was deluged with more than 100 tons of high explosive. It wou have required an air raid of gigantic proportions to have achieved the same effect

OFF THE ROCKY ISLANDS OF GREECE: A Short Sunderland of the R.A.F. keeps a watchful eye over possible enemy movements during a reconnaissance flight. The part played by our pilots in the Greek campaign has been a considerable one

BRITISH AIRMEN "RETURN FROM THE DEAD" IN GREECE: An R.A.F. bomber crew were "reported missing, feared killed"; but they nevertheless made their way back to their base after a series of amazing experiences. Hits from anti-aircraft shells forced them to land on the beach of a tiny island. Later, they reached the Greek mainland in a fishing-boat: when their identity was discovered they were fêted in the village and carried round in triumph. They were showered with bouquets, wine and other gifts, and the Squadron Leader (seen on the left above) made a speech from the Town Hall steps



WHAT FLYING IN GREECE MEANS TO THE R.A.F.: The nature of the country in which our pilots are operating is well illustrated by this picture—rough, improvised landing-ground, and forbidding, snow-covered mountains behind. It is in conditions like these that our men have been putting up some of their finest efforts against the Italians



ALL READY FOR A FLIGHT OVER THE ITALIAN LINES: The pilot runs up his engines and is about to take off to bomb the Italians in the Albanian hills: this form of warfare is particularly disliked by the demoralised Italians who cannot stand up to attack from the air

FIRST PICTURES from the WESTERN DESERT

Some of the Many Thousands of Prisoners and Stores of Italian War Material Captured Before Sidi Barrani

HUNDREDS OF ITALIAN PRISONERS BEING MARCHED BACK AFTER THE CAPTURE OF SIDI BARRANI: IN SOME CASES ONLY ONE BRITISH SOLDIER WAS SUFFICIENT TO TAKE CARE OF WHOLE COLUMNS OF THESE MEN!

AFTER THE CAPTURE OF SIDI BARRANI: A LONG CONVOY OF ITALIAN LORRIES—MANY OF THEM BRAND NEW—BEING SENT BACK TO THE BRITISH REAR ON THE WELL-MADE ROAD CONSTRUCTED BY THE ENEMY FOR HIS ADVANCE INTO EGYPT!

One of the most vivid episodes of the war has been the wonderful advance of British forces in the Western Desert. Masses of war material—guns, tanks, lorries and other equipment of all kinds—were left strewn over the plains by the fleeing Italians. Since these triumphant operations began up till December 28 the number of prisoners counted far exceeded 38,000, of whom some 25,000 were Italians. Much of the captured war material was sent to the British rear along the fine road which the Italians had themselves built through the desert ready for their advance towards Mersah Matruh and the "capture of Egypt"

A WINTER'S MORNING ON THE AERODROME AFTER THE FALL OF THE FIRST SNOWS : During the winter of 1939 the R.A.F. acquired great experience of operating from more or less makeshift aerodromes under very severe weather conditions. If this winter of 1940-1 should prove as bad as last year's, there will, at any rate, be the knowledge so painfully acquired then. What winter means to the operational work of the R.A.F. is fully discussed in the article published below

Drawing by Roland Davies

THE COMING OF WINTER

And What it Means to the Operational Work of the Royal Air Force

Described by JOHN R. BEECH

A YEAR ago all Europe shivered in one of the most severe spells of cold weather for many years. In particular, the units of the British Air Forces in France—the Air Component with the B.E.F. and the Advanced Air Striking Force up behind the Maginot Line—suffered severely because of their exposed positions. Most of the squadrons were operating from advanced and improvised aerodromes which had no sort of hangar accommodation at all. Practically all the maintenance work had to be done in the open, often in snowstorms.

With such handicaps, the ground crews did magnificent work. Nevertheless, for weeks on end some units were unable to do any flying of importance.

Fortunately, at that time there were no active operations in progress. The position must be very different for the German and Italian squadrons occupying these same aerodromes to-day. For not only have they to combat the rigours of the weather, but they are exposed to all the hazards of determined bombing attacks by the R.A.F. as well. Should we get a spell of weather as severe as that of a year ago, the enemy may find it very difficult indeed to maintain any large-scale operations against this country from their nearer aerodromes in France.

This winter the position of the R.A.F. is not nearly so bad as that of the British Air Forces in France a year ago, whatever the weather may be. Our squadrons are operating from well-found and well-equipped aerodromes which have proper facilities for maintenance and repair under cover. The servicing arrangements of Fighter, Bomber and Coastal Commands of the R.A.F. are highly developed and efficiently organised to cater for all emergencies. The British offensive on Germany is likely to be maintained in weather which will prevent flying on any scale by the enemy.

That does not mean that risks will be taken on days or nights when the long flights to objectives in enemy territory would be unreasonably hazardous. The Germans have an advantage in that the nearness of their bases means that they have to fly only one-sixth of the distance to reach targets worth bombing. That means, too, that our bombers have six times the chances of running into bad weather after they have started on a raid. Our superior equipment and training should offset these apparent disadvantages.

The two major handicaps to flying in winter are fog and ice-forming conditions.

A ground fog makes take-off and landing exceedingly difficult. There are radio methods of bringing in aeroplanes to a "blind landing," but they are severely handicapped by war. All German bombers are equipped with the Lorenz system of blind approach, but it is unlikely to be of much use to them on the advanced aerodromes in France. Our own position, operating from well-established aerodromes, is rather better, but at present no large-scale operations are possible by either side when there is widespread fog over its home stations.

Icing is a rather different problem. It usually occurs only locally at certain definite heights. Really cold weather, when the temperature is well below freezing and the air is dry, causes little trouble. The dangerous conditions are those in which the temperature is just above freezing and the air is saturated. Then the passage of the wing or airscrew of an aeroplane through the air will speed up the flow, reduce the density, and promote freezing of the water in the atmosphere. In these circumstances ice can form on the surfaces of an aeroplane at amazing speed, sometimes building up to a layer many inches thick.

The effect is to throw an airscrew blade seriously out of balance or to so modify the contour of a wing that it no longer continues to act as a lifting surface. Ice-formation is also liable to jam up control surfaces so that they no longer answer to the attempts of the pilot to move them. Even more common and serious is ice-formation in the carburettor, a device which at the best of times is something of a small-scale refrigerator in itself. Carburettor icing causes the aero-motor to lose power until it cannot sustain the aeroplane in the air.

Many and various methods have been tried out for the prevention or cure of ice-formation on aircraft. Several methods are in regular use, but none have yet proved to be a complete solution.

Carburettor icing may be overcome by "bleeding" alcohol into the system or a "flare trap" from the exhaust. The Germans have abandoned carburettors in favour of direct fuel injection, and so do not suffer from icing troubles there. Best known and most widely used of all de-icing devices is the "slinger ring" for the anti-icing of airscrews. The "slinger-ring" is attached to the spinner of the airscrew and consists of a little trough running round the circumference inside the spinner, with small ducts leading to the root of each blade. A solution of alcohol and glycerine is fed into the trough and is flung out along the blades of the airscrew by centrifugal force. The solution loosens the ice on the blade so that it is thrown off. Often a specially thick band of plating is put round the fuselage of a multi-motor aeroplane opposite the airscrew disc to protect it from the lumps of ice flung from the blades.

A similar method was tried out for the leading edges of the wings and tail. A solution was fed through ducts on to leather pads placed along the surfaces. Difficulties of even distribution over the whole span of the wings prevented the method achieving complete success.

The most used method of wing de-icing is the Goodrich pulsating overshoe. This acts in rather the same manner as the familiar "plate-lifter" beloved of schoolboys and others at Christmas parties.

Rubber tubes are led along the face of the leading edge of the wings or tail and are covered with the leather "overshoe." Normally the tubes lie flat and deflated. But when flying through icing conditions the pilot turns on a small pump driven from the motor, which alternately inflates and deflates the tubes and so cracks the ice off the overshoes. If ice can be prevented from forming on the leading edge, then it is unlikely to form farther back on the surface, where adhesion is more difficult.

Recently the Germans have been fitting some of their bombers with exhaust-heat de-icers. By this method the exhaust-pipe from the motors is led along inside the leading edge of the wings and is intended to maintain them warm enough to prevent the formation of ice. The method is open to objections, in that leading the exhaust into the wings near the fuel-tanks is a dangerous procedure, and that by the time the gases reach the wing-tips—the most important points of all to keep clear of ice—the radiator surface is so great that the effect is negligible. Furthermore, the effect of such a long exhaust-pipe on the motor materially reduces its performance. Nevertheless, the method may be developed.

(Continued on following page)

THE COMING OF WINTER

(continued)

Yet another method which has been used is that of smearing the surfaces with a paste, the chemical composition of which prevents the formation of ice—in theory. The results have not been altogether satisfactory.

The best safeguard against ice is to avoid those strata of the atmosphere in which icing conditions exist. This is sometimes possible by either climbing or diving a few hundred feet, although on occasion icing conditions have been known to exist for a depth of 20,000 ft.

Extreme cold, as opposed to the comparative warmth of icing conditions, has other troublesome effects on an aeroplane and its crew. Guns may freeze up, bomb gears become difficult to work, the insulation of electrical gear tends to lose its potency, camera lenses refuse to function and instruments "pack up."

Modern flying-clothing is a miracle of warmth, yet sometimes even that cannot cope with the conditions, and the crews of long-range bombers occasionally go through agonies. This may happen especially if the electrical gear of an aeroplane is affected, as the gloves and boots of the flying-suits have electrical coils built into them to keep the extremities warm.

Some of these troubles may be cured in the future when pressure-cabins for really high flying come into fashion. Conditions vary little from one year's end to another at 35,000 ft., where the temperature remains constant at about minus 55 deg. C. and the air is dry and free from ice. The objections to the sealed pressure-cabin in military action is that one bullet will let it down like a punctured tyre, with disastrous results to the crew.

On the ground, the chief trouble about cold weather, apart from maintenance, which may be done in a warm hangar, is the starting of engines in aeroplanes which have to be left out permanently dispersed round the edge of the aerodrome. Small tents are sometimes erected over the nose or engine nacelle. The ground crews go in a huddle inside with an oil-stove, and after a while, if not asphyxiated, persuade the motor to start.

A sudden and heavy fall of snow, such as happened last year, may have an effect on air operations. There is firstly the question of take-off from snow-covered aerodromes. This can be solved by rolling out the runway either with special snow-ploughs or by marching troops rapidly over a track across the field.

Snow sometimes reduces visibility in the same way as fog, and in continuous snowstorms at ground-level there is little doubt that air operations would be brought to a complete stop, as in fog.

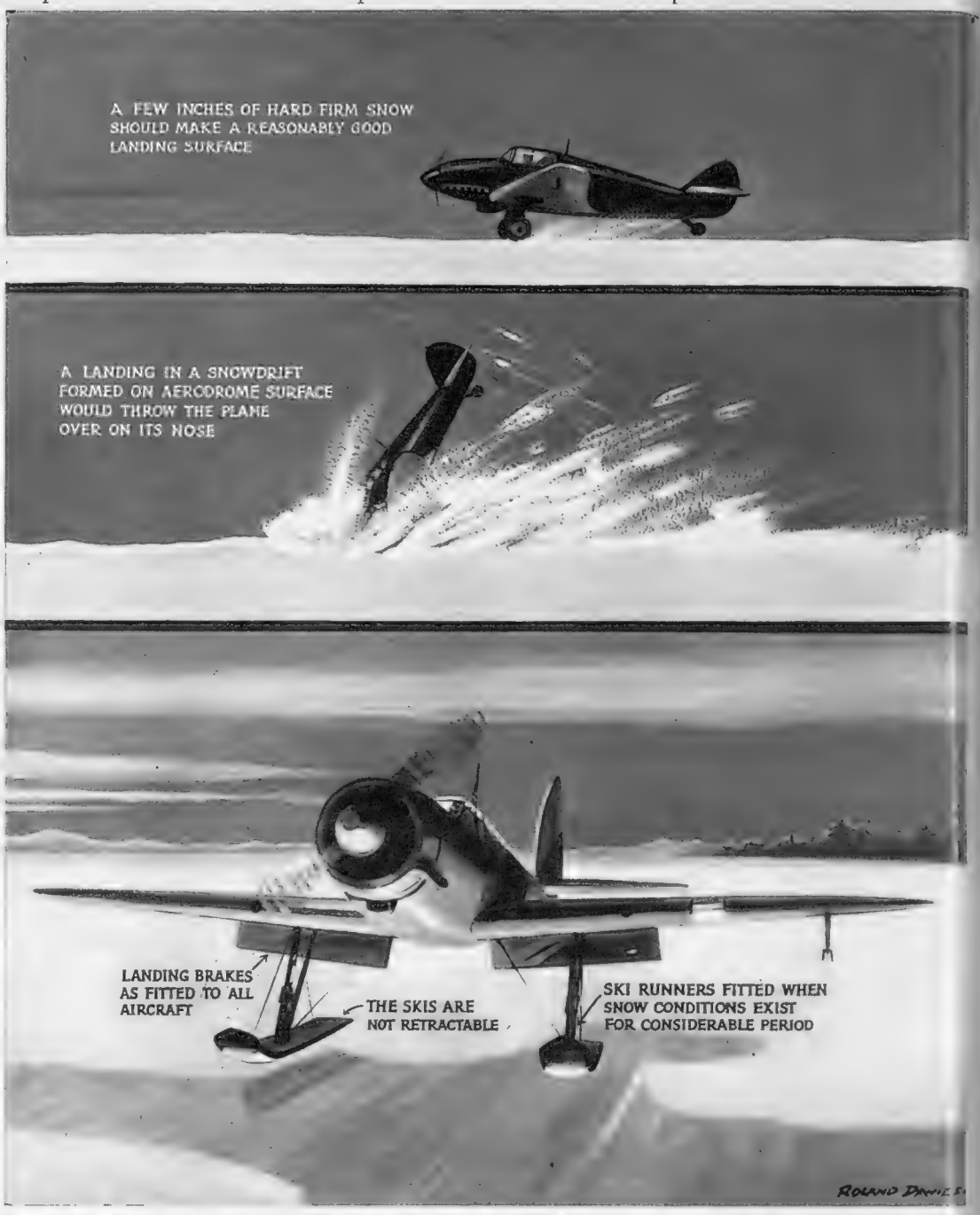
When clear weather follows heavy snow, the effect might help rather than hinder air operations. Towns stand out amid the white landscape and any area of activity immediately reveals itself. Similarly, flying at night is made easier because the reflected light from the snow shows up points which would be hidden otherwise. Rivers, and roads on which there is heavy traffic are immediately obvious from the air.

Blind flying through snowstorms is not in itself a serious problem with modern aids to navigation and de-icing apparatus.

In Canada a great part of the flying this winter in the Empire Training Scheme will be carried on with the use of skis in place of the wheels. This is not possible for all purposes, especially on first-line aeroplanes such as Spitfires, Hurricanes and Wellingtons, which depend on their retractable undercarriages for much of their performance.

For such machines a runway rolled out in the snow with heavy rollers or by large numbers of marching troops is sometimes used to solve the problem.

Whatever rigours the rest of this winter holds store, we can be certain that the Royal Air Fo will be less affected by bad weather than will t *Luftwaffe*. The same thing is true of the oppos extreme, for in the heat of the Western Desert t experience of years has made possible the operati of our aeroplanes in perfect safety in conditions a for periods completely beyond the capabilities either the Italians or of any units the Germans m send to their help.



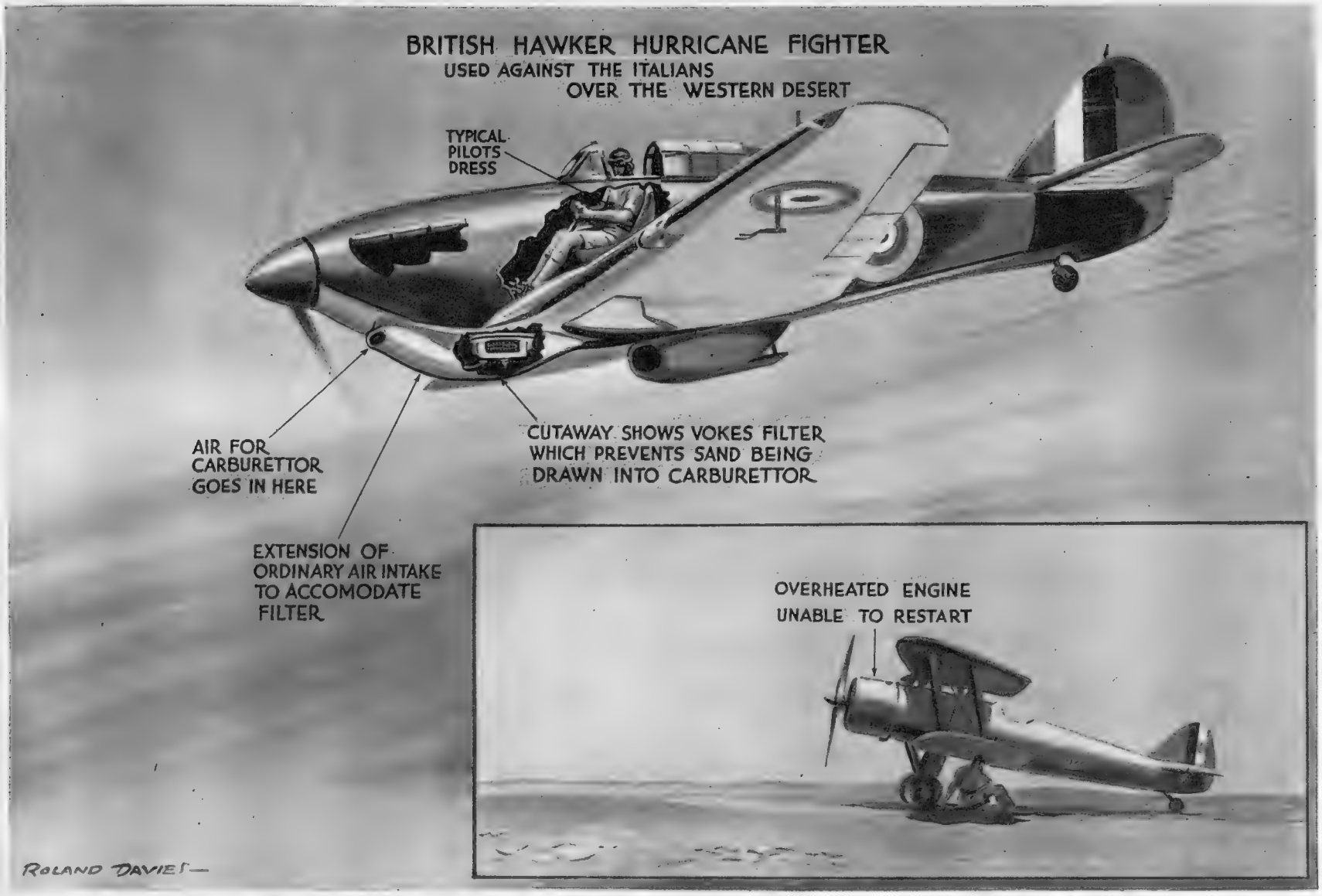
LANDING AN AIRCRAFT IN SNOW; WHEN A DEEP DRIFT CAN EASILY PROVE DISASTROUS. TO COUNTERA THIS SOME AIRCRAFT HAVE BEEN FITTED WITH SKIS FOR FLYING IN CONTINUOUS SEVERE WEATH

When flying in severe weather a few inches of firm snow should permit a reasonably good landing: a landi in a drift of deep snow would, ho ever, be dangerous—a fast-landi plane could easily be wrecked un such conditions. Where long spells snow are encountered, planes are oft fitted with skis in place of wheels, a frozen lakes are a popular land ground; at least one British plane w so fitted for use in England last wint Incidentally, the plane shown in t bottom section of the above drawi represents no particular type, but representative of the planes used Canada, Finland and elsewhere.

On left—

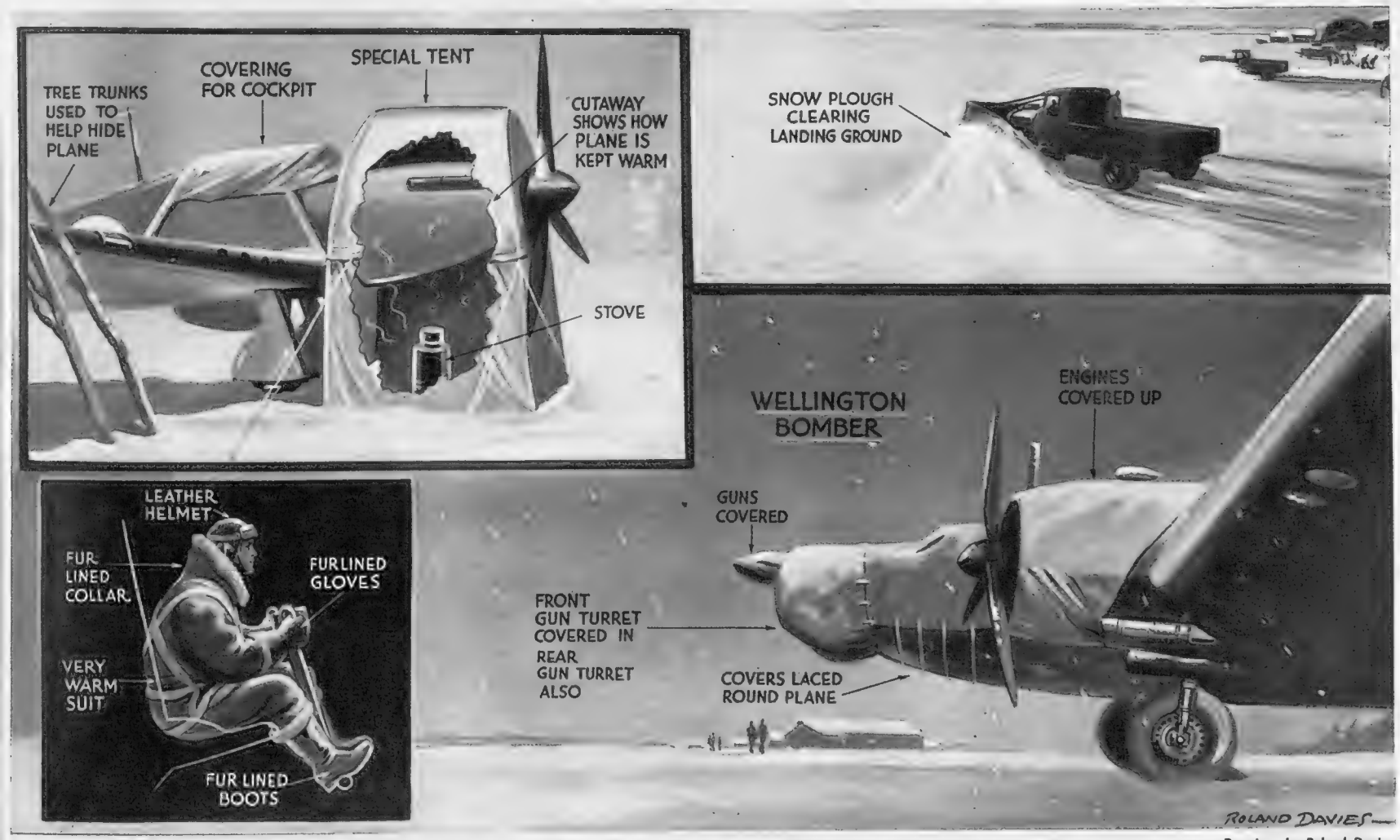
FLYING IN FRIGID WEATH

When flying in extreme wintry co ditions, ice not only forms on t wings of a plane but also on the pr pellers, which throw chunks of ice t to the sides of the fuselage. The pa inset on the left of the above drawi shows how ice forms on the inside the windows in the pilot's cab making observation difficult; the co trols, too, become so stiff that t pilot must continually move them prevent them binding up. The t side-by-side pictures demonstrate h snow on the ground can complet change the landscape; the pil looking down to locate his positi finds many of his familiar landscapes go



AS OPPOSED TO THE FRIGID ZONES, THERE ARE ALSO MANY IMPORTANT PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN HOT-WEATHER FLYING

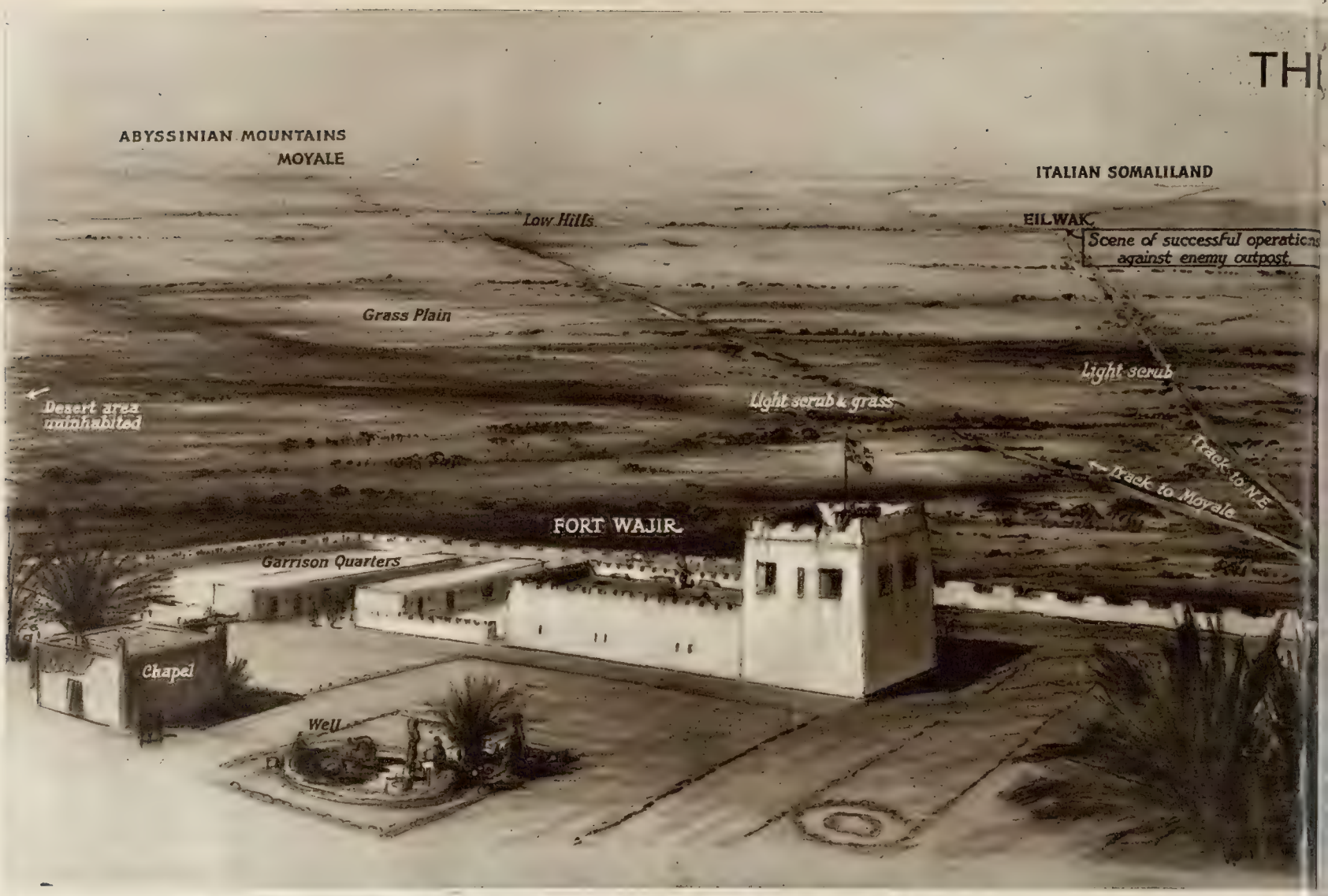
When planes are operating over the desert, great attention must be paid to the problem of excluding sand and dust from the vital parts of the engine. The top sketch shows a Hurricane equipped with special Vokes air filters to prevent sand from being sucked into the carburetter. It also indicates the typical dress of our fighter pilots when flying in the East. Much thought has also been given to the problem of overheating. Both the R.A.F. and the Regia Aeronautica have learned many lessons from past experiences of desert flying. It is not so long since that a pilot who landed his plane and switched off his engine was unable to restart it until it had cooled down. The engine, in fact, became compressionless after some hours of running



Drawings by Roland Davies

FOUR ASPECTS OF WINTER FLYING SHOWN IN GRAPHIC FORM : IN SEVERE WEATHER, CONDITIONS BECOME VERY DIFFICULT

Flying in severe wintry weather is complicated by many factors which greatly hamper both pilot and plane. Some of these are depicted by Mr. Davies in his series of drawings above. The top left panel shows how British planes were kept warm and ready for action during the severe wintry conditions in France early last year. In the lower left panel the problem of keeping the pilot warm is indicated : flying in frigid weather is a great test of endurance for the air crews ; they often suffer from frost-bite, in spite of the heat drawn from the engines. Electrically-heated clothes are not now generally used, the crews relying upon their warm clothing to protect them. As shown in the top right-hand panel, although planes can operate from aerodromes after a fall of snow of from three to four inches, deep snow would have to be cleared before aircraft could take off. The last panel, in the bottom right-hand corner, shows how the vital parts of bombers are protected against the cold when they are dispersed around aerodromes out in the open



A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF FORT WAJIR—A TYPICAL "BEAU GESTE" FORTRESS IN THE NORTH KENYA REGION: This little whitewashed fort with its crenellated parapets lies at a point where tracks converge through the grass and scrub of this wild East African province. One runs north-westerly to Moyale, scene of an Italian outburst of energy soon after Italy's entry into the war; another runs north-easterly to Eil (or El) Wak, the scene of a successful little action by a British Imperial force announced on December 19. Within the low outer wall of the fort enclosure are the garrison's quarters, wells and a chapel. Outside are vast stretches of grass and scrub country, only broken by an occasional outcrop of granite

A PRIMITIVE METHOD OF OBTAINING WATER AT EIL WAK: A line of about sixty natives pass buckets of water from the bottom of a deep chasm. The lower end of this human chain works in very uncomfortable heat. Eil Wak has only a military value

KEEPING WATCH AT THE EMBRASURES OF FORT WAJI Fort Wajir is one of the loneliest outposts of Emp It is here shown manned by Gold Coast Infantry. the dusty traveller the fort seems a paradise of com

THIS sparsely populated and little-known Frontier Province of Kenya can offer nothing to attract travellers or planters. Except for a few isolated military posts to ensure frontier protection and prevent raids by cattle thieves, there are few signs of civilisation. Rains are so meagre and uncertain in extent and duration that travel about the country is exceedingly difficult and hazardous. Well-centres are extremely few and those yielding permanent water are the objectives of all who move about the country. Caravans between Abyssinia and the coast traverse routes along which water can be found, and flocks and herds of domestic animals can only be driven across the country where water and feed are available.

Proceeding by car from Nairobi an excellent lunch is obtainable at the Outspan Hotel, Nyeri, the scene of many amusing and exhilarating night parties during visits of lively sparks whose names figure in Debrett. From the balcony of the hotel we watched the depredations of locusts that had just invaded the district and saw natives frantically trying to save coffee by beating the shrubs, but it was only after leaving the Nyeri plantations that we ran into the main swarm. The sky became darkened by the living cloud of full-grown, fat locusts and the air was buzzing with the movement of myriads of fluttering wings. Every blade of grass and every sprig on trees and shrubs was plastered with a solid mass, greedily devouring all eatable herbage. As we proceeded along our track they rose in thousands, producing a filthy green mess on the windscreen, where they squashed and beat against our faces, whilst falling in hundreds within the body of the car. For many miles the car skidded over a slimy mass of squashed locusts, whilst we were subjected to an incessant battering, but we eventually got clear and stayed that evening at the Nanyuki Rest House, at the very foot of the 17,000-ft.-high Mt. Kenya, with its snow-capped summit. Here, at 6,500 ft., we sat after dinner over a big log fire, listening to the thrilling experiences of a party of amateur sportsmen who had foolishly gone in search of rhinoceros.

On the following day many miles of high, rolling down country were crossed, on which numbers of sheep were contentedly grazing, before entering the thickly forested region around Meru, where big game is so numerous as to be dangerous. At Meru, a Government Administrative centre, famine relief work was in progress, and scores of picturesque natives were busily engaged erecting temporary grass shelters for the storage of grain that was being sent there by the authorities. Famine in these parts is caused as much by the ravages of the locusts as by failure or insufficiency of rain and these periodical visitations cause intense suffering and loss of life unless relief is sent.

A descent to lower altitudes, where heat became oppressive and rainfall was less frequent, caused a quick change from the rich, tropical foliage of the foothills to semi-arid conditions. The dense rain forests and rank, healthy cultivation of all kinds of tropical fruits and vegetables were replaced by parched plains where an occasional bare tree or a group of straggling, leafless bushes totally devoid of foliage were all that survived the trying conditions.

The road had now degenerated into a dirt track that was difficult to follow and at times our wheels sunk into deep sand. Once, trying to negotiate a deep, narrow ravine, scraped off the drain-pipe of the petrol ta and had hastily to improvise a cork to preve the loss of our valuable gas. However, reached Garba Tulla before nightfall a quartered ourselves in the rough mud buildi with grass roof given the designation of a R House. There was water in a nearby gully, a after a scratch meal off tinned goods we tried sleep in a still atmosphere at a temperatu near 100 deg., worried by sandflies and bats.

THE PROBLEM OF WATER IN THE NORTH KENYA PROVINCE: The question of water supply is insistent one with any traveller entering North Kenya. In the dry season, knowledge of where the next water-ho are to be found is essential; in the rainy season, the torrents in the river-beds make the country impassable

BLOCKADE OF ITALY'S EAST AFRICAN POSSESSIONS

Where the Kenya Forces are now Closing the Frontiers to the South

A SAVANNAH TYPE OF SCENERY IN THE ARID BELT OF NORTH KENYA: There are wide stretches of this park-like scenery interspersed between grass plains and arid scrub country. The larger trees here all assume the umbrella form which becomes so familiar to the traveller in these regions

A DRIED-UP RIVER LINED WITH DOM PALMS ON BOTH BANKS: The figure in the centre of the view is standing on the bottom of a dry river-bed In the rainy seasons large volumes of water come pouring down this channel

Next day many types of country were passed. Sometimes broad cotton-soil plains, thickly overgrown with tall, coarse dried grass and dotted with clumps of trees or clusters of palms, gave the country a most attractive appearance. Zebra, gazelle, antelope and ostriches were very numerous. At other times belts of thick bare scrub would be crossed, but the most interesting region was the passage of the Uaso Nyiro, a flat waterway fed by a big catchment of high ground to the west, which in the rains carries a considerable volume of water. The depression is so flat as to be scarcely perceptible, and at the end of the dry season is only represented by a small flow in a narrow stream lined with a belt of rank vegetation. Further to the east is the Lorian swamp, a great morass to which hippos are often driven when other parts dry up; indeed, one of the most wonderful scenes ever photographed by an intrepid hunter was that of hundreds of hippos wallowing in the only patch of mud and water left at the end of an unusually dry period.

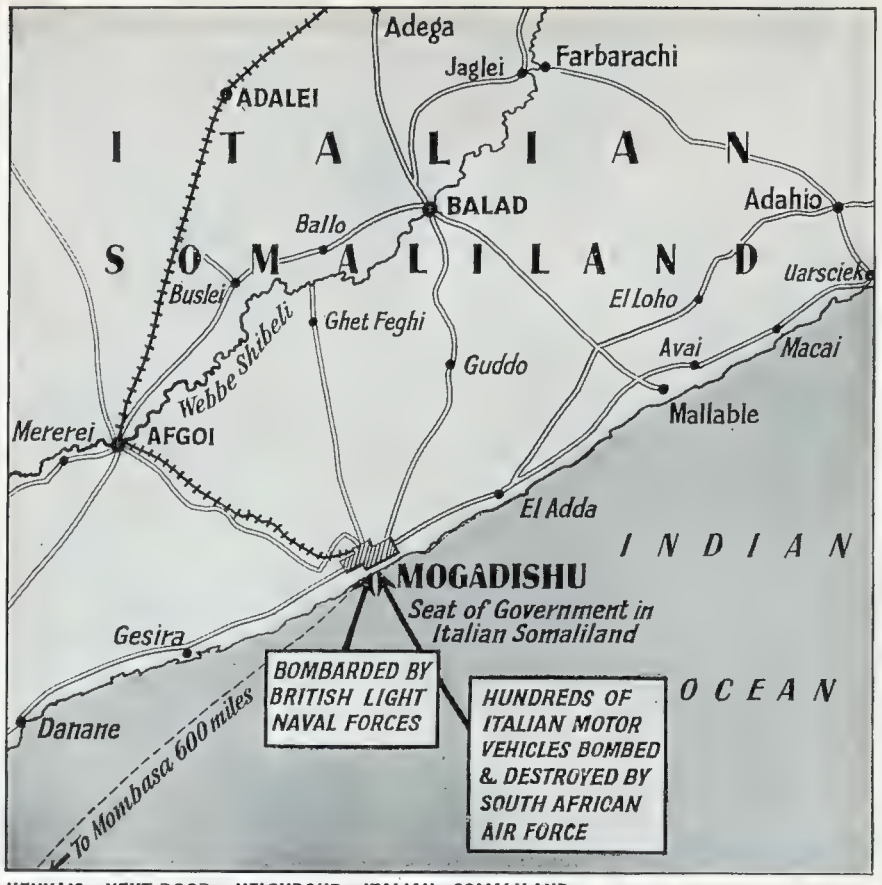
As the fort of Wajir was approached near sunset, we ran into a long patch of loose sand-drifts on which we were compelled to lighten the load and assist by pushing the car. For hours this process had to be repeated at short intervals in a temperature around 100 deg. F., and it was indeed with a sigh of relief that our headlights suddenly shone on the fort about midnight, causing the troops to rush to their posts, bugles to blow and a general stir. On making ourselves known, the sentries opened the gates and we got a warm reception from the garrison officers, who so rarely saw visitors. A hot bath and hearty meal put new life into us, after which we slept like tops till dawn in pukka buildings. Next morning we found ourselves in a typical "Beau Geste" fort, and regretted having to depart as soon as we had visited the wells, for we were working against time in expectancy of the rains breaking almost any day. Continuing the journey north-west, we passed considerable strips of dense scrub, but at one spot we were surprised to observe scores of vultures perched on bushes near the road. Suspecting some dead animal, we proceeded to investigate and found a native quietly carving up and smoking the flesh of a dead camel. He informed us that a lion had killed one of his camels the preceding night, but being also desirous of food he had forestalled the lion, which would return to finish its meal after dark. We camped that night in the open near our kitchen fire, which seemed particularly comforting when we heard lions roaring not far away. The following day we reached Eil Wak, on the Italian-Somaliland frontier, where water is obtained from deep, crooked wells in limestone. Here we found water being raised by a string of undraped men and women

AN ODD SIGHT WITNESSED BY THE TRAVELLER WHEN JOURNEYING THROUGH NORTHERN KENYA: At first sight it looks as if a flight of giant butterflies had settled on this tree. But things are not quite as pleasant as that. All the branches are covered with big thorns, which make the tree a formidable obstacle

who, with a perilous foothold on the sides of the well, were passing giraffe-hide buckets up and down wells 70 ft. deep to the tune of a song. The descending vessels were flung from one to another upside down in order to convey air to the half-suffocated women allotted the most unpleasant task at the bottom of the well. A short distance away we found a perspiring, half-clad D.C. gasping for breath in a tent

(Continued on following page)

THE NORTHERN FRONTIER PROVINCE OF KENYA, WHERE FIGHTING HAS JUST TAKEN PLACE: This map shows the position of Fort Wajir and Eil Wak, so recently the scene of a brilliant little action against an Italian garrison. Marsabit lies to the west, and to the south the roads converge on Meru, the town to the north-east of Mt. Kenya. The distances separating various points are considerable



KENYA'S NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOUR—ITALIAN SOMALILAND: North-east from Northern Kenya lies Italy's portion of Somaliland, a territory which was enlarged as a gift by Britain. Now it forms part of the Italian "bloc," which is in a very grave situation with regard to supplies. It is blockaded by the British Navy both in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, and has been attacked by British bombers continuously for many months. Italian Somaliland has recently received special attention

THE BLOCKADE OF ITALY'S EAST AFRICAN EMPIRE

(*Continued from preceding page*)

surrounded by his papers and documents, and struggling with some taxation questions and cattle-thieving cases brought to his notice by distant, inconsiderate officials provided with secretaries, filing cabinets, ice-water and fans. A general grouse did us both good.

Eil Wak has always been an annoyance to the Italians, as the nomad tribes watering animals here found it convenient to transfer their allegiance from power to power, according to the demands of the authorities for taxation.

After a day crossing rugged sandstone ridges, we camped late on some high ground where giant Euphorbia of the Candelabra class and others of a spiky genus were plentiful, and next day reached Ramu on the Daua River, the southern frontier of Ethiopia. This boundary river is a tributary of the Jiba, a much more suitable frontier than the present ill-defined boundary line. The Daua River is fringed with a wide belt of thick forest, a delightful contrast to the barren, arid country sprinkled with withered scrub which characterises its approach. At this time of the year—March—human beings are rarely met in these wastes, and great care has to be taken to preserve the water carried in locked metal containers. Game is fairly abundant, and the beautiful but rare vulturine guinea-fowl is very plentiful and provided poor sport, but excellent meat for the camp. On returning to Wajir the Moyale road was explored as far as Buna, the scene of numerous recent conflicts with the Italians. Miles of dusty plains had to be traversed, and one of our cars was soon in distress through too much low-gear work and inhalation of clouds of flour-like dust. This misfortune on a little-frequented and waterless road forced a return to Wajir for help. A few thunderstorms now warned us of approaching rains, and we just managed to reach Meru before the rains seriously broke, although the latter part of the journey entailed exasperating delays and much hard work in lifting the car out of mud into which the wheels had ploughed a deep rut. A few days later all direct communication with the N.F. Province was cut off for the season, as the dirt tracks were impassable and the unbridged water-courses became unfordable. Beeby Thompson

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A neatly executed operation, resulting in the capture of the Italian post of Eil Wak, was announced on December 19. Fifty of the enemy were killed and 120 taken prisoner. All the Italians' war material was captured. British casualties were less than ten. As the British land forces attacked, planes of the South African Air Force went ahead of them and dropped two and a half tons of bombs in a heavy air bombardment. When armoured cars and infantry advanced on the town the Italians resisted, but, according to reports reaching Cairo, they were no match for the British. A lieutenant-colonel was among the prisoners.

Colonial troops fought better than the Italians, it was stated in military circles. The commander of the garrison fled in a mule cart on learning that an attack was imminent. One of his officers was so disgusted that, when the British entered the town, he willingly showed them where the stores were hidden. Booty included field-guns, machine-guns, ammunition, petrol dumps and food supplies. Eil Wak is about 100 miles north-east of Wajir. All four roads suitable for motor transport in dry weather in this territory converge on Eil Wak, as well as numerous rough tracks.

IN THE OLD ARAB QUARTER OF MOGADISHU, FREQUENTLY BOMBED OF LATE: This chief port of Italian Somaliland has not only been bombed from the air, but it has also been shelled from the sea by British light naval forces. Mogadishu is a town of some size and historic standing; it has an old Arab quarter and a large Christian cathedral with a twin-towered frontage. It is connected by rail with Afgoi on the Webbe Shibeli, one of the big rivers of East Africa

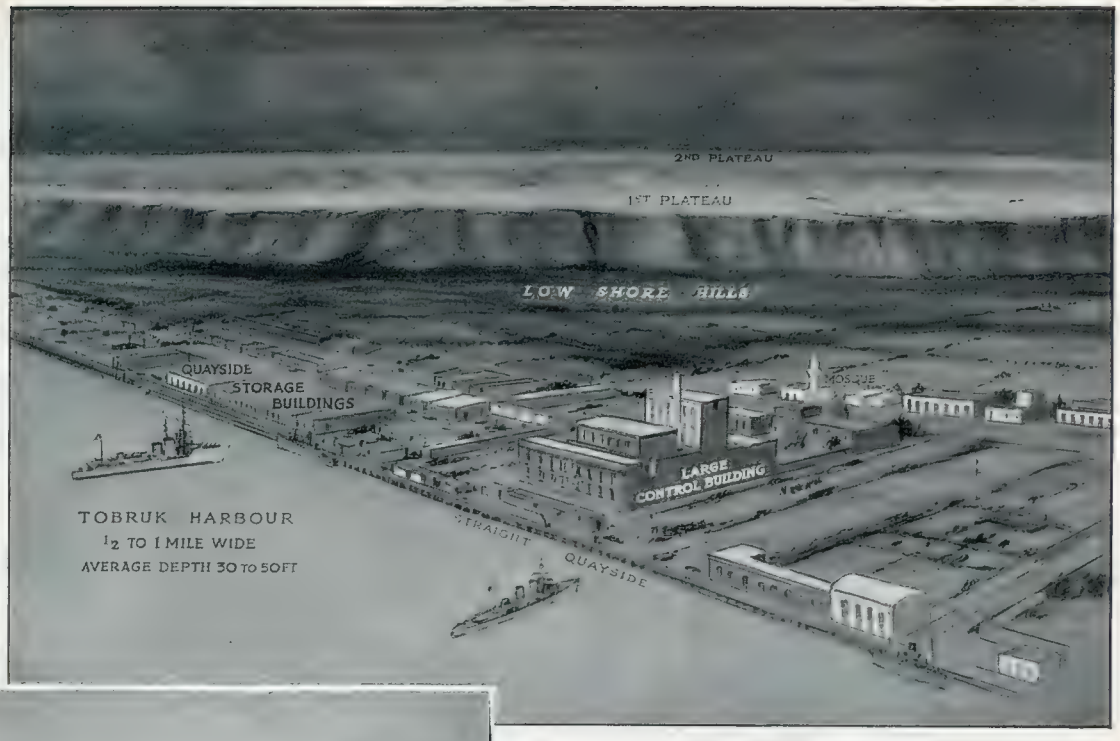
AN UNUSUAL SCENE IN A THIRSTY LAND: The Webbe Shibeli, or River of the Leopard, here presents a scene of verdant charm rare in the dry regions of eastern Africa. Its position in relation to Mogadishu, capital of Italian Somaliland, is shown on the map above

A TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF THE WIDE GRASS PLAINS OF N.E. AFRICA WHERE KENYA MARCHES WITH ITALIAN SOMALILAND: As far as the eye can see, the tall, waving grass extends in unbroken sweeps. These prairie districts are to be found interspersed between low scrub country and open savannah lands where the scene is park-like in character. In the above view a zebra is standing in the middle distance. Cloud is coming up, with the approach of the rainy season

THE PROGRESS of the LIBYAN CAMPAIGN

—Special Diagrams and Drawings

The third phase of the Libyan campaign (taking the initial attack as the first and the pursuit as the second) brought the attacking forces into a new area, which they reached by proceeding north-westward along the seashore, which here bends to the north, and over the rising ground within the Libyan frontier. The three positions which came most prominently into the news of the fighting were Tobruk, Bardia, and Derna. All three positions exhibit markedly different features and present varied problems of defence. The only feature in which the three places resemble each other is in their proximity to the sea and their vulnerability to attack by the guns of the British Navy

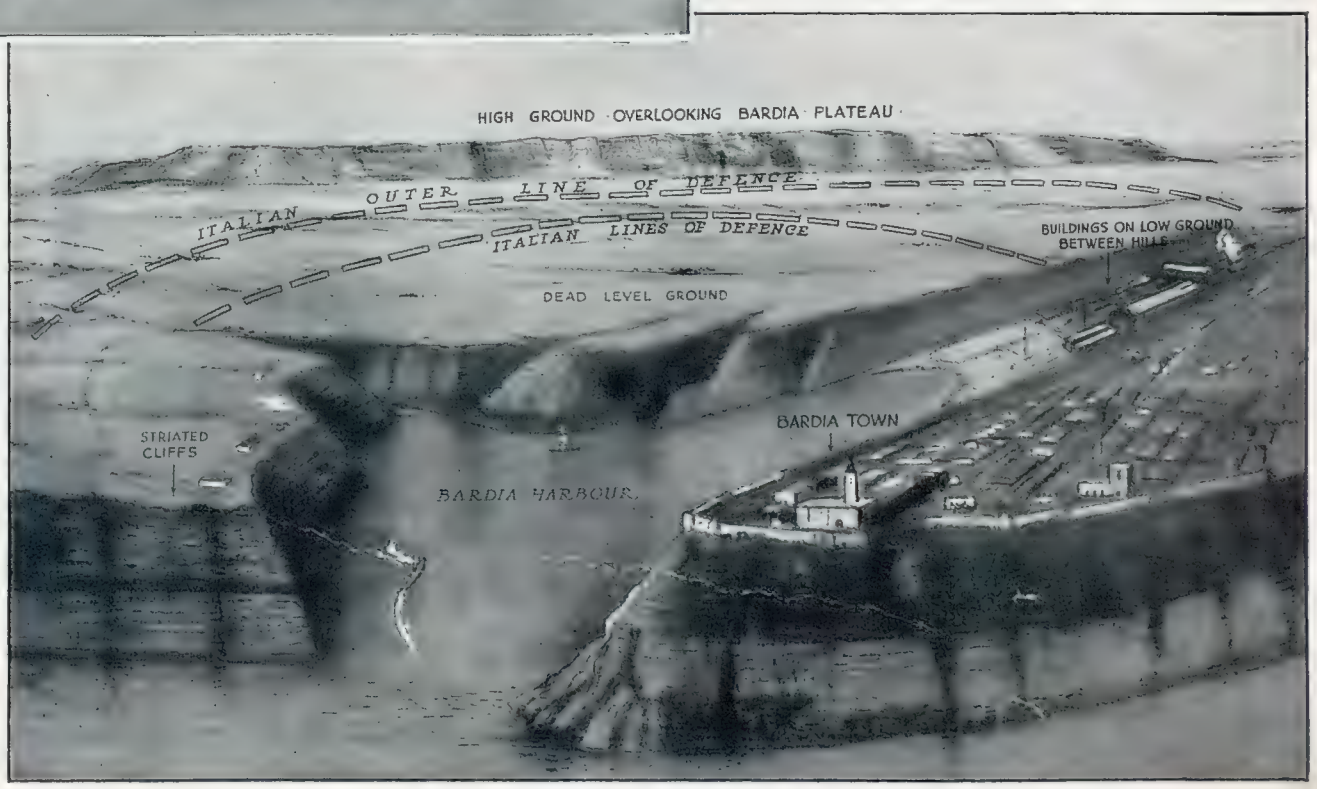


Above—**TOBRUK**

This once Turkish townlet has been developed to a considerable extent under the Italian occupation of Libya since 1911. Official buildings with arcaded verandahs, and all painted white in the Italian manner, have been erected, together with a number of warehouses and stores alongside the straight line of quays which flank the harbour. This area is protected by a short ridge projecting from the mainland. Behind the town is a low range of hills, alone visible from sea-level. Beyond these are the rising plateaux which form part of the limestone massif of Cyrenaica

On left—**DERNA**

Derna is a town of considerable size, situated in the midst of a narrow mass of vegetation which follows the line of the stream which flows through the town and down to the shore plain, where it has formed a delta. Here at the edge of this low-lying area are the buildings of the port of Derna, with an open anchorage beyond. The port has a tropical air as seen from the sea, being backed by a mass of tall palms, with irrigated gardens beyond. The verdure of Derna's setting depends entirely on the perennial flow from the two springs at the head of the valley; one step outside this irrigated area and one is in the desert. Derna was a Turkish town before the Italian conquest of 1911. It has not been visited by many travellers or tourists during recent years, observers not being welcome in this region. It is a collection of the usual whitewashed official buildings, with arcaded fronts, and an occasional tower. The town lies, as shown here, within a mass of palms and other trees. The surrounding heights rise to about 1,100 ft. above sea-level



On right—**BARDIA**

Quite different in shape and geological formation is the harbour of Bardia. The cliffs here are of a curious striated rock, with noduled masses protruding in layers. The strata of these unpleasant-looking cliffs lie perfectly horizontal with the plateau surface which they form and support. At the far end of the long branch of the inner harbour is a collection of buildings which would be commanded from the surrounding plateau level. The town proper seems to occupy a fairly large area which comes up to the shelving cliff edge, on the north-western side of the harbour. It seems a difficult position from the defence point of view. If semi-circular lines have been thrown out by the Italians in front of the harbour and town, they would occupy approximately the positions shown here

Drawn by Edward Osmo

AN IMPRESSION OF THE BATTLEFIELD IN FRONT OF SIDI BARRANI WHEN THE BRITISH ATTACK WAS LAUNCHED AGAINST THE ITALIANS

The most serious fighting in the whole of the forward movement of the British and Imperial forces took place after the forcing of the outlying chain of Italian desert fortresses. It was one brigade supported by tanks which bore the brunt of the battle. The day before they had stormed into Tummar camp and taken it, after knocking out a dozen Italian tanks which attempted to counter-attack. Then they went on northward and bivouacked under the stars, leaving another enemy camp, called Point 90, still untaken on their right. At dawn they started again, long columns of lorries crawling inconspicuously across the plain in the cool, dust-laden morning breeze. Their tactics were to straddle the tracks leading south and west from Sidi Barrani and then attack. Three thousand yards from their objective they were detected and came under fire, but they pressed on a little farther before the infantry left the trucks. Then the fighting grew hotter as the Blackshirts realised the seriousness of the position. The British brigadier in command sent a unit of a famous South Country regiment to hold a stretch of high ground on the left wing. Highland troops held the centre and a Midland regiment was despatched to take the right flan Then the battle proper began. "The sandstorm was hellish," said a major who described the actio "The Blackshirts stuck to their guns surprisingly well. It was extremely hard to see them in the trenches among the sand-dunes, and there were plenty of them." A section of the most moder British battle-tanks was sent to aid the left wing, and they smashed their way through, so that the infantry could storm and occupy objectives. But the centre and right wing were held after three-quarters of a mile by heavy enfilading fire. The brigadier took stock of the situatio and decided to send in the centre to attack. Bayonets were fixed, and the Highlanders charge against savagely intensified opposition. There was hand-to-hand fighting at several points befo the enemy trenches were clear. Finally, at about 2 p.m., the Scots gained a foothold on a lo ridge, from where they could see Sidi Barrani and the sea spread out before them. Late Sidi Barrani itself fell to our victorious forces

Drawn by E. G. Lambe

STREWN WITH THE IMPEDIMENTA OF A MODERN ARMY : THE DESERT AFTER THE ITALIANS HAD SURRENDERED NEAR NIBEIWA FORTIFIED CAMP

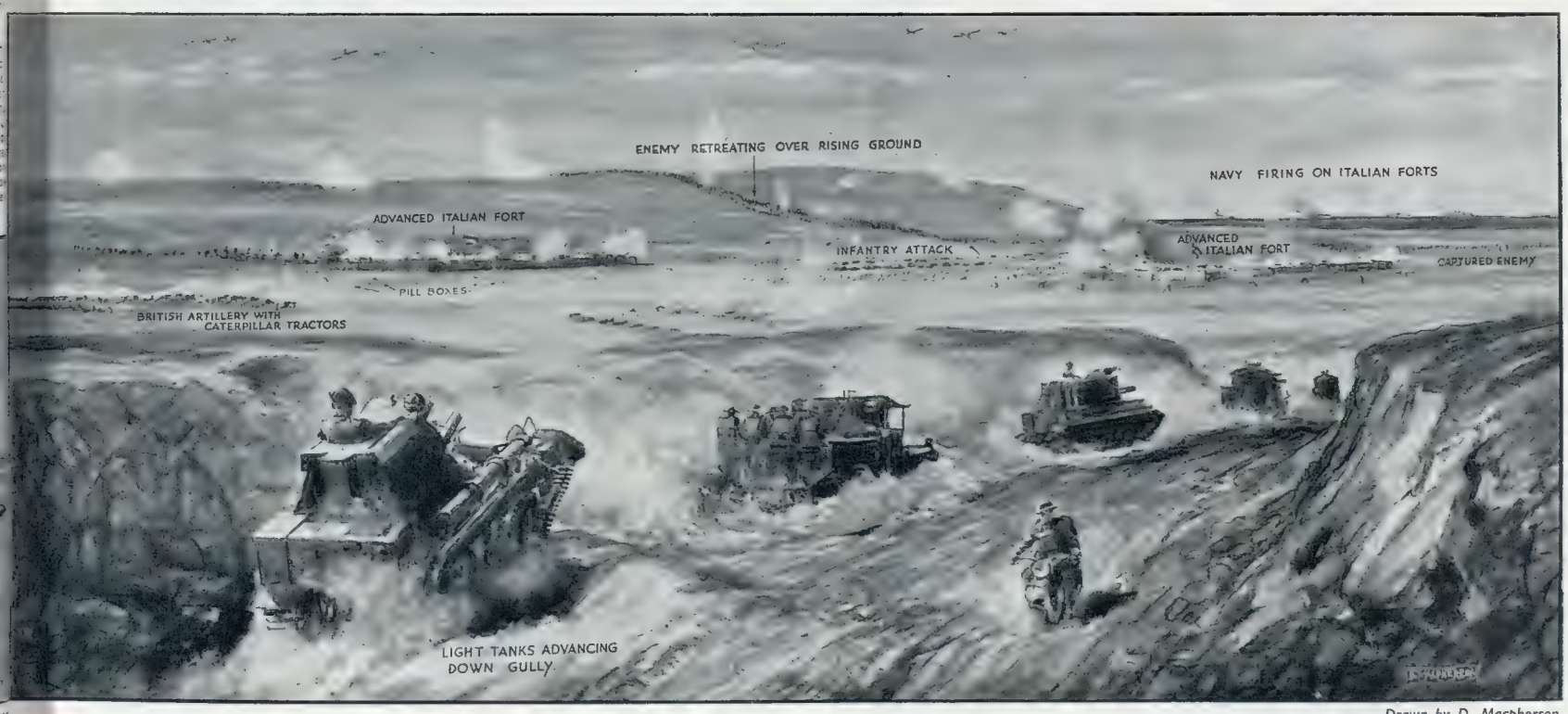
"Nibeiwa Camp was an unforgettable sight," writes an eye-witness. "Everything was as silent as the grave. Everyone had moved on except two British Tommies, who had been left in charge of the only British tanks damaged in the action. I counted thirty-eight Italian tanks—some smashed up, others abandoned undamaged. As we drew near Sidi Barrani we ran across miles and miles of abandoned transport. Hundreds of acres of the desert were covered with well-made petrol dumps, containing 40-gallon drums of petrol, from which we continually refuelled. There were also crude oil dumps in perfect condition. The whole armament of a modern army was lying about in heaps. Nothing had been removed. It was a magnificent prize for the British troops who were now using Italian lorries for all operational purposes." The loss of so much equipment was a grievous blow to the Italian forces, as Marshal Graziani himself admitted

The con was cha imp

The BATTLE of SIDI BARRANI

NECESSITY BROUGHT FORTH INVENTION IN THE DESERT : Owing to the pressing need for cover in the exposed stretches of flat desert, all kinds of burrows were invented. Here is a desert Jack-in-the-box with his Bren gun, waiting for an enemy plane which might seek to indulge in a low flying strafe. His camouflaged gun could come into action in an instant

THE VARIETY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BRITISH TANKS ASTONISHED THE ENEMY : The enemy's communiqués speak eloquently of the devastation caused by the tanks brought into action against them. There was almost a note of complaint in the mention of a new and particularly effective type, of which, apparently, they had had no knowledge



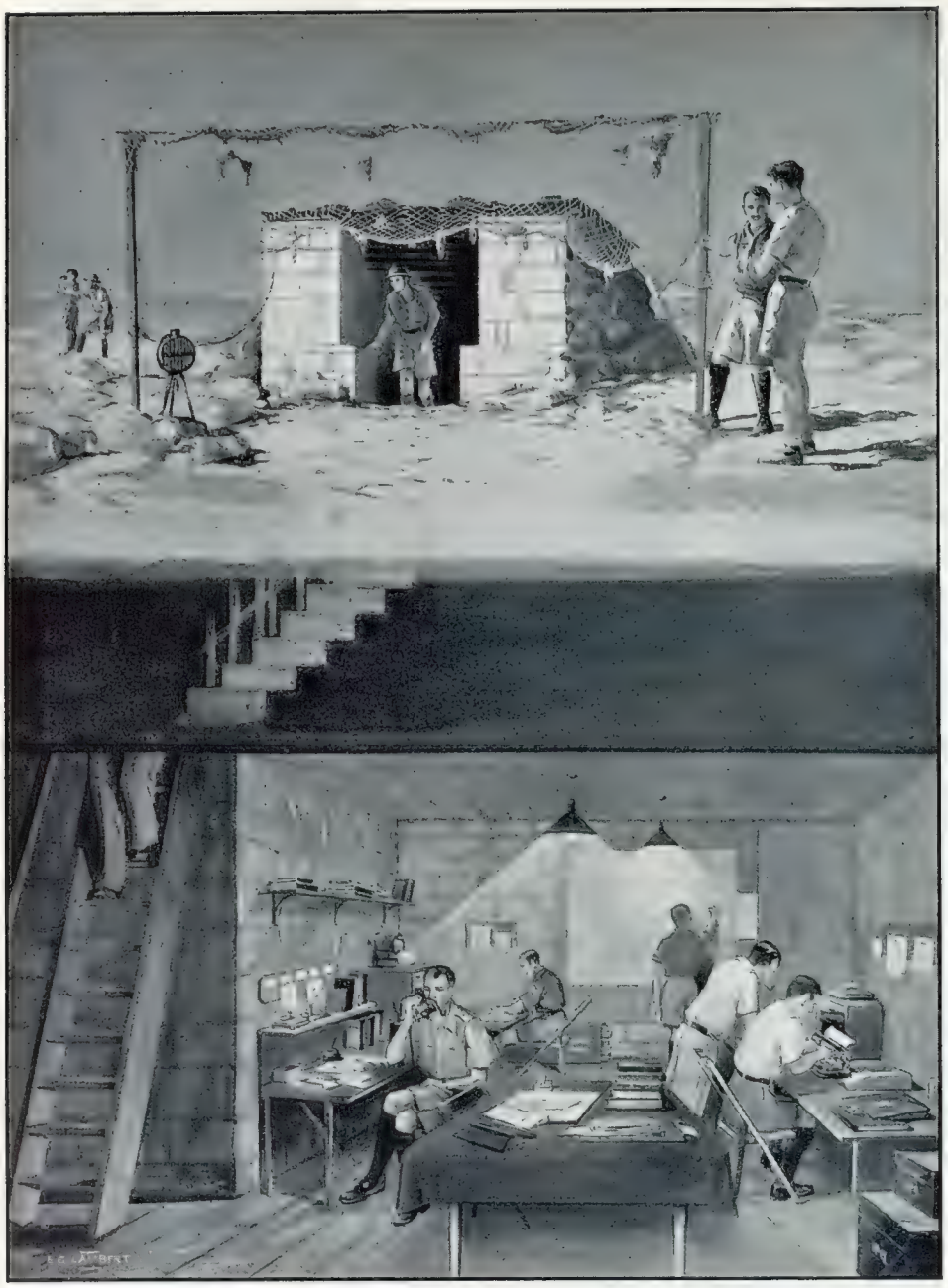
Drawn by D. Macpherson

THE BATTLEFIELD IN FRONT OF THE ADVANCED ITALIAN FORTS SOUTH-EAST OF SIDI BARRANI SHOWN IN PICTORIAL DIAGRAM

The attack began with a manœuvring to the rear of the advanced Italian posts which had been consolidated after the first advance into Egypt in September. Every gully and piece of natural cover was employed to conceal the advance of the British mechanised units, and so cleverly was this done that it was not until the enemy was literally at their doors that the Italian garrisons realised the import of the British forward movement. Two of the Italian desert forts, constructed since September, are shown in this view, with infantry attacks developing against them. These forces were carried to the scene of action in lorries, dropped to the desert, and immediately ran into action against the enemy, who soon began to surrender in considerable numbers. The forts were found to be constructed with elaborate care ; stone walls protected the quarters of officers and men, but proved unavailing against attack from the rear

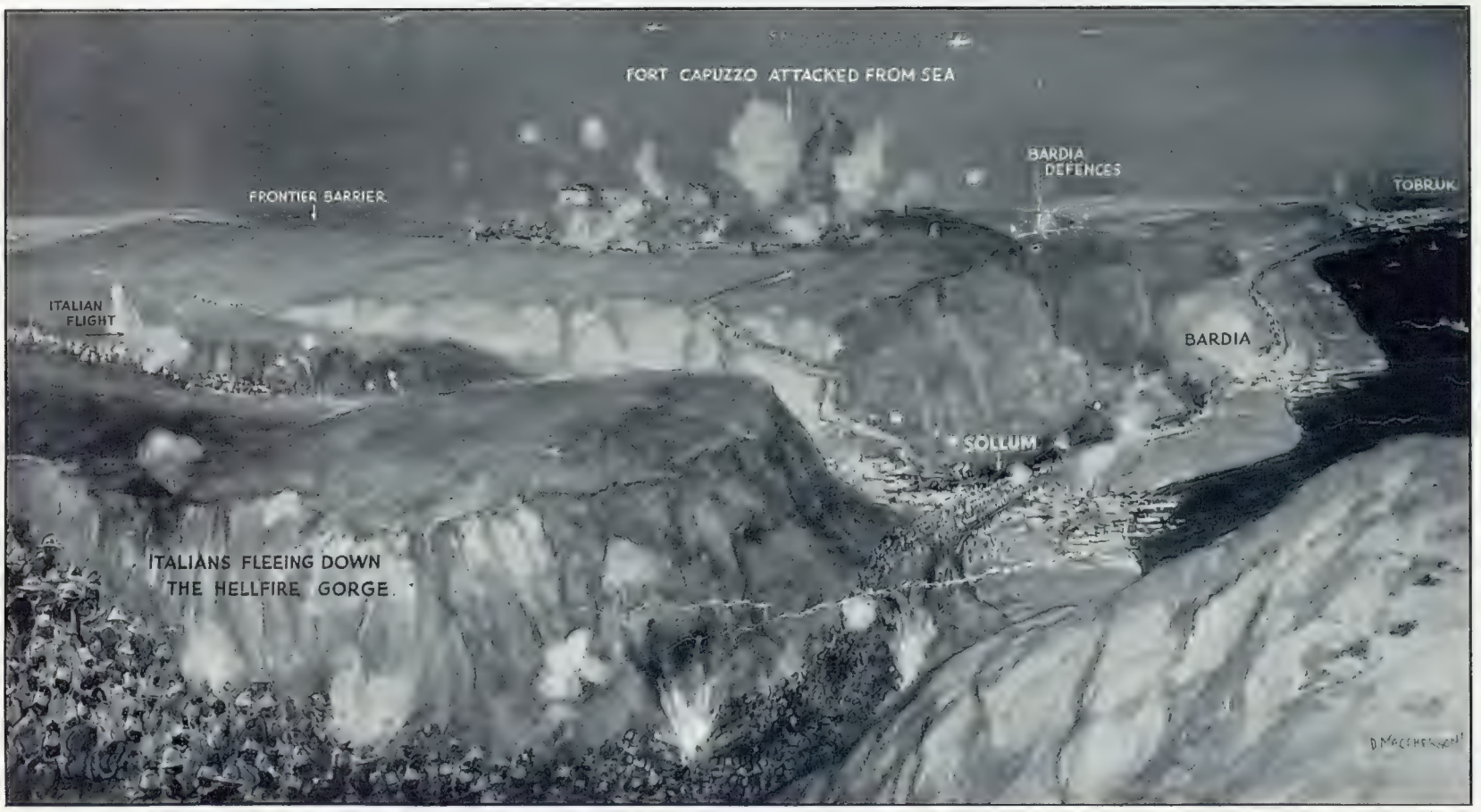
CONCEALMENT WHICH LED TO A SUCCESSFUL SURPRISE

Against the Walled and Entrenched Italian Forts in the Barren Libyan Desert



EXTEMPORISED CONCEALMENT IN THE DESERT: During the preparations for the big attack on the Italian Army of Invasion, every type of concealment became a pressing necessity. As we have already recorded in these pages, even an old Roman tomb was made use of in this connection. In a land of underground chambers and galleries within pyramids, it was only natural that the Army should make use of these for cover from enemy observation

THE BRITISH GENIUS FOR IMPROVISATION: All during the long period of preparation, new needs presented themselves as the forces grew in numbers. Quarters had to be found to provide for special duties. These were met by a quick series of improvisations, effective and economical in cost and labour. Here is an example. A certain Australian force wanted office quarters. What more quickly fixed up than the huge packing-case which had been used to transport the wings of an aeroplane? It proved large enough—and had the added refinement of a door attached to one end!



Drawn by D. Macpherson

A PHASE IN THE FLIGHT OF THE ITALIAN ARMY OF INVASION FROM WESTERN EGYPT: When the news of the fall of Sidi Barrani became known over the Libyan battlefield, a general flight of other sections of the Italian Army began. The retreating troops were pressed by the pursuing British and Imperial forces, and at one time there was a very critical period for the enemy when he began to pour down "Hellfire Gorge" on to the beach road leading back to Italian Libya. The R.A.F. and the Navy caught these troops as they retreated from the upper desert, and also from Sollum itself. The confusion must have been great, as these streams converged on the only good roads back to the comparative safety of the Libyan fort district

The "LITTLE HITLERS" of EUROPE

The Continental States are full of Tricksters and Traitors who have Betrayed their Countries for Personal Power and Gain

By FERDINAND TUOHY

HAVE you paused to reflect what poor stuff Hitler's selected shadows for other countries have turned out to be in practice? This is even a matter—the poor nature of his puppets—that may have close bearing on the course of the war. One would think that with such a commodity as a New Order to sell, men of calibre would have broken surface. Able enthusiasts capable of convincing and inspiring "occupied" populations that now total well over one hundred millions of Europeans.

But no. The Super-Führer has searched for all of ten years, only to discover—Quislings. In a couple of cases where more forceful characters were dug out, one has just been pitched out and half-hauled back; while the second is making no headway with his latest pupils.

Pierre Laval is no lightweight, but a clever and crafty politician of long standing. The best description I have heard is that he was "a perfect specimen of what ailed the Third Republic." He piled up a really vast fortune out of the devastated departments after the last war. Jobbery and treachery have been his stand-bys. He looks and is a horrid creature: "slimy."

In one respect Laval did not heretofore correspond to a "Quisling"—that is to say, he was not a pro-Nazi whose ambition it is to be the Gauleiter in his own country, beholden to the Super-Führer. Laval was always more pro-Mussolini. Yet now that the "bullfrog of the Pontine" is not going so well, the Auvergnat will have small difficulty in switching over to Hitler.

Acting on information received from his arch-agent in France, Abetz, Hitler no doubt maintains a short list of possible Quislings for that country. Laval was given the first try-out, but how Hitler ever thought this man, so despised by his fellow-countrymen, could have been accepted by them as their pilot in a New Order, it is hard to determine. The plain fact is that there has been a complete dearth of Quisling candidates acceptable even to a third of the French population, that third which is supposed to be anti-British and therefore by inference pro-New Order.

Some thought the Nazis might try to put over Doriot, a tough customer who suddenly swung from Communism to Nazi-ism and who has never been without a youthful following. We never hear of Doriot these days, which may mean a lot or nothing. With the somewhat wild Alsatian Bergery as Ribbentrop, and with the ex-Liberal journalist Déat as Goebbels, Doriot may yet be pushed forward should the new Laval stunt from Paris fail, or should Flandin not come up to Hitlerian expectations.

Of fat and fifty 6 feet 4 Flandin, only this can be said with certainty: he will try to act as mediator between Britain and Germany. But brains are not his longest suit.

Once one leaves France, there is no mistaking the company of "little Hitlers"—and their worth. Norway's version has been the subject of some uncertainty. Was he or was he not summoned before "the Head," in Berlin, for a thrashing? *Qu'importe!* We do know that for all the hold he has contrived to exercise on his native land, this commonplace, plotting Army Major has advanced no farther than his having to be constantly protected in Norway by German soldiers. If Quisling is to be all that the Nazi magnet succeeds in forcing from Norwegian soil, then the prospects of a real new order across the North Sea are correspondingly brightened.

Hungary has had her counterpart in Major Szalesy (or Szállassy) on whom Hitler has banked for years, partly in order to keep the Government of the day up to the (Nazi) mark. Actually this person has shown one talent: for illegal organising. With nothing inspiring about him, and no speaker, the Major sought to get round these drawbacks by proclaiming his to be a divine mission requiring no elaboration. From prison, which he latterly left after serving three years, he communicated to his adherents that "God keeps me in seclusion for his ultimate end." never any explanation on this head. Still, it all shows how Hitler works through religion. Inquart, Szalesy, Tizca. . . .

Hitler has not been able to conjure any sort of "Hacha" out of the Poles. For this fortunate fact our thanks should go mainly to General Sikorski, who dashed perilously to Paris directly he saw his country was doomed, and there on September 29, 1939, formed a legal Government literally against the hands of the clock, and got it instantly recognised by most of the world before Hitler could get up to any tricks in Warsaw, whereby he might have established some craven Pole at the head of a local administration.

To-day 16,000,000 inhabitants crowded into Central Poland are held under the terrible heel of the German Dr. Frank, and ne'er a Polish "deputy Hitler" to be espied on the landscape. Nor ever likely to be!

It is a moot point whether "Hacha" can be mentioned in this gallery at all, despite that his name has gone to form a label destined to survive historically. That he was terrorised and tortured into submission must make a big difference to our estimate. He saw Prague plastered out of existence next morning unless he signed on the dotted line. Pertinent here is that Hitler has not in twenty months laid his hands on any substitute among the silently hating Czechs.

In Rumania, a new "Little Hitler" takes over, Horia Sima. His predecessor, Goga, died daft, and the one before that, Codreanu, was "bumped off." Incidentally, it might not be wise for Horia, or Antonescu for that matter, to go up too often in an aeroplane. Obviously there is no lack of candidates in such gangster ranks as the Iron Guard. But what of the worth of such men as steerers of a New Order? What of their representative value in Rumania?

Turn to nearer home.

By neighbouring standards, the Danes have been relatively submissive. Yet the Danish deputy for Hitler has made small inroads on the population. I met Dr. Klausen in Aabenraa four years ago. He then told me he could rely on thirty thousand adherents. The great majority were strewn about South Jutland, bordering the Reich. A recent Copenhagen message, telling of the capital's hostility to a Klausenist rally, suggested that 12,000 young men are all that Klausen can rely on to-day.

It is six years since I called upon the Dutch engineer, Mussert, near Utrecht. He is still Hitler's deputy in Holland, though he has made a sorry mess of it. Unable to put over such as there is of him, with his fellow-countrymen, he has been reduced by his masters to the status of a mere implement by which the German Nazi Pattern State is being forced upon Holland. Inquart's is the strong hand; Mussert is merely kept on in order that the Dutch Nazis shall not be deprived of the man they have saluted as their chief.

What Hitler wanted of these foreign deputies was that they should securely found national-style Nazi orders in their respective countries, a veneer of legality being a first consideration. For all that Mussert has so emerged, he might as well be a German-born Baldur or Buerkel. Moreover, when this good engineer but mediocre leader appears in public, he has to be protected by escorting Dutch Nazis, who themselves are being increasingly subjected to attack.

No, the Dutch are not "having any."

Do you remember all the song and dance that used to be made round "the Belgian Führer," Léon Degrelle? This once-vociferating young man is now checking ins-and-outs at the Franco-Belgian frontier. That is all the use Hitler has found for him in practice. The Nazis say that Degrelle's Walloon stock rules him out of their scheme for a new Low Countries lay-out "featuring" the Flemings. But why was not that discovered in the nineteen-thirties when Goebbels' machine supported and financed Degrelle's Rexism? Nearer the truth, the Nazis have found that Degrelle is a "wash-out" with all Belgians, beginning with the King. The Rexists thrived on lying slander. It is one thing to depict the faults in a country; another to paint oneself as 100 per cent. right and virtuous, and those who don't agree as dirt. Rexism did the latter and is paying the bill.

Other countries have their would-be "Little Hitlers." One or two of them offer extremely interesting portraits. But it is perhaps more revealing to deal with the finished product as witnessed in action on a continent requiring national-type leaders for a New Order.

HATED ALIKE BY HIS "FRIENDS" AND COLLABORATORS AS WELL AS HIS MANY ENEMIES

Pierre Laval's political record would be hard to equal even in France, where men of his type have abounded both before and since Hitler. An intriguer of the first order, his adventures have always resulted (if in no other way) in profit to himself. Recently dismissed and detained in custody by Marshal Pétain, Laval is now back in Paris at the request—or, rather, order—of his German friends. Here he is seen at one of his "conferences" in the Hotel du Parc, his Vichy headquarters; with him (in the centre) is Ferdinand de Brinon, whom Pétain has agreed should replace General de la Laurence as Vichy's Delegate-General to Paris. Despite that de Brinon's wife is a Jewess, he is a friend of Otto Abetz, Hitler's representative in Paris. On the right is a blind veteran of the last war, Georges Scapini, who has just returned from a visit to French prisoners of war in Germany—of whom there are some 2,000,000 and who are being kept in Germany for bargaining with Vichy

THE WAR IN GREECE

Where the Heroic Struggle Against the Might of Fascist Italy Continues

BRITISH HELP FOR GREECE IS INCREASING RAPIDLY : The British forces in Greece are now being continuously supplied with bombs, shells, and other munitions from overseas, thanks to our Naval command of the Mediterranean. This official photograph from the Air Ministry shows transport for the R.A.F. being unloaded at a Greek port to join the stacks of bombs already landed on the quayside. Later on, it is expected that a good deal of the war-matériel captured from the Italians in the Western Desert will be made available for use by the Greek Army in Albania. Huge quantities of this captured equipment could be put to use in this fashion almost immediately

THE MAN WHO HAS OPPOSED MUSSOLINI : The Crown Prince Umberto is known to be a leader of the anti-Mussolini forces in Italy. Now that that country's Army and Navy have suffered such severe reverses, his position grows stronger as the Duce's weakens. Personal relationships between Italy's next King and Mussolini have never been cordial : in the event of a rising, the Crown Prince would certainly be the leader

ITALY SENDS TROOPS TO ALBANIA BY AIR : As Italy is but a short distance from Albania, transport planes have been used by the Army to rush troops to the fighting area to reinforce the hard-pressed Italian forces ; in this work the Italians are stated to be receiving help from the Germans. As most of the Albanian airfields are now menaced by the R.A.F., it is likely that these air-borne troops are being landed in the vicinity of Durazzo, some distance away from the fighting area

PREPARING FOR A FLIGHT OVER THE FRONT : A British pilot (in centre) and two war correspondents examining a map in Greece, before the correspondents are taken on a flight over the Italian lines in Albania. In front of the desk is a Service Press Officer of the Air Ministry now on duty in Greece

THE MAN WHO HAS SUCCEEDED BADOGLIO : General Ugo Cavallero has succeeded Marshal Badoglio as Chief of the General Staff of the Italian Army. As a civilian he was president of Italy's largest steel-works ; as a soldier he was closely associated with Marshal Diaz, Italy's hero of the 1914-1918 war. He is reported to be more in sympathy with the Fascist Party than was Royalist-minded Badoglio

BRITISH PILOTS IN GREECE HELP IN THE AIR WAR OVER ALBANIA : A British bomber crew entering their aircraft on a Greek airfield before taking off for a flight over the Italian lines. R.A.F. help in the Greek campaign has already been praised by the Greek Commander-in-Chief, General Alexander Papagos

Drawing by Montague Dawson

THE DECK OF A BATTLESHIP IN WINTER: "It is impossible to eliminate the dangers and discomforts of snow and ice on board ship. . . . Modern steel ships are not nearly as warm as the old wooden walls"

The SEA PATROLS in WINTER

Snow and Ice which Add to the Hardships of the Crews at Sea

By FRANK C. BOWEN

THE reports of the Greek Army driving the Italians back through the snow-filled mountain passes came as quite a surprise to many people, who always regard the Mediterranean as one of the Navy's warm-weather stations, where officers and men disport themselves in whites, or at the worst in magpies (blue monkey-jacket and white trousers), while the crews of the ships in home waters are shivering through a British winter. Taken on the average it is, of course, warmer than home waters, but at this time of year it can be quite cold enough for most men's tastes, especially in the Ægean, where the local winds from the eastward, blowing off the land, can raise a heavy sea a few miles off shore, and cause sudden and very uncomfortable falls in the thermometer. White uniforms and shorts are for their season only.

All modern ships built in peacetime are designed to serve wherever they may be required, so that they are equally well provided with heating apparatus and ventilating plant on the thermotank principle, which keeps the internal spaces of the ship at a reasonable temperature, whatever it may be outside. Most of the working places in the ship are also heated, as much to keep the mechanical gear in good working order as to provide comfort; while the mounting of practically all guns in turrets or light gun-houses, instead of behind small shields, greatly reduces the hardships of cold weather to the men who have to sleep beside their battle-stations ready for instant action.

It is quite impossible, however, to eliminate completely the dangers and discomforts of snow and ice on board ship, whether she is a man-of-war or a merchantman. While every precaution is taken to enclose all working parts and to keep them heated, the low temperature on the outside of the thin plating makes it impossible to do so altogether effectively, and modern steel ships are not nearly as warm as the old wooden walls when they were provided with proper heating apparatus. And there are bound to be many jobs to be done on the open deck, even if it is no longer necessary to keep the whole watch in the open ready to handle the sails and yards.

The decks of a modern man-of-war are much more exposed than those of the old-timers, with their high wooden bulwarks. When a man slipped on ice or snow on the deck in those days, he fetched up against the bulwark in the lee scuppers, a painful process, which often meant a broken arm or leg, but which was better than going overboard into an icy sea from a cruiser or destroyer that is steaming so fast that she may well be a quarter of a mile on her course before it is possible to get the way off her sufficiently to lower a boat—when her business will permit her to consider stopping at all. The motion of the modern ship is much more violent than that of a sailing-ship, which had the leverage

(Continued below on left)

(Continued from above on right)

of her canvas to steady her, and the seaman who has to do a job on the open deck in really cold weather has to walk very warily, and think of the old seaman's traditional advice to "keep one hand for yourself and the other for the ship."

Among the duties which must inevitably be done in the open is the manning of the anti-aircraft guns, which, from their position and function, can seldom be given more than a shield to protect the working parts. The principal numbers in the gun's crew have their seats or positions, which give them support, but the unlucky ratings who have to pass the ammunition by hand—no light weight when the shell and the extra big propelling charge is "fixed" in one piece to permit rapid fire—have to keep their balance on the slippery deck, no matter how violent the motion of the ship may be, and in no conceivable circumstances may the steady stream of shells to the gun be interrupted for one moment. Luckily, the anti-aircraft guns are generally mounted amidships, where the ice is seldom as bad as it is on the forecastle head or quarter-deck.

(Continued on following page)

On right—**A HEAVY SEA BREAKING OVER THE DECKS OF H.M.S. "WARSPITE."** This is the battleship which led the attack on the German destroyers at Narvik

A SNOW FLURRY IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN : A light cruiser convoying a big transport runs into a snowstorm whilst in the Mediterranean : contrary to current conceptions, this inland sea is not exclusively the warm weather region most of us assume it to be !

(Continued from preceding page)

There is a comforting and very general belief that sea-water does not freeze, but that does not apply to the spray that a ship throws over her bows when steaming at high speed against a head sea in really cold weather. The faster she steams, the worse it is, even in low latitudes, and much of the Navy's work has to be done well up into the Arctic. The German positions on the Norwegian coast, and the invasion craft that they have collected there, have to be constantly covered. Ships on escort duty have to steam at least three miles to their convoy's one, and the more northerly routes often have to be taken as a precaution. Enemy ships trying to run the blockade get up as far north as possible to reach the protection of the Norwegian coast, with its enemy batteries and fringe of islands, and British patrol ships waiting to intercept them have to keep steaming in high latitudes, not for one hurried passage, but for weeks on end.

A BRITISH BATTLESHIP CRASHING HER WAY THROUGH A ROUGH SEA IN WINTRY WEATHER

A DESTROYER STEAMING AT HIGH SPEED AGAINST A HEAD SEA IN REALLY COLD WEATHER: "There is a general belief that sea water does not freeze, but that does not apply to the spray that a ship throws over her bows when steaming at high speed

The SEA PATROLS in WINTER—(continued)

H.M.S. "VALIANT" FIGHTING THE SEAS: THE IMMENSE FORCE OF THE HEAVY SEAS CAN WELL BE GAUGED FROM THIS IMPRESSIVE PICTURE TAKEN FROM THE BRIDGE OF THE VESSEL

Snow is plentiful up there and is bad enough, but the worst of it can at least be swept away. Ice caused by the freezing of constant sheets of spray is infinitely worse. It has to be chipped or chopped off the decks and plating, and special care has to be taken to keep it out of the working parts. It forms on the lenses of the gunnery instruments, and on the windows of the wheelhouse and reduces the visibility, which is generally poor in any circumstances. In spite of all precautions, the weight of snow and ice can be enough to increase the displacement of a ship sufficiently to affect her speed, and even her stability, to an appreciable extent.

Happily, the modern sailor is prepared for the cold as regards clothing, as far as can be contrived. The old-timer, seized by the press-gang at any season of the year, and hustled on board with no more than the clothes in which he stood, could only find warmth in such clothing of miserable quality as he could buy from the slop-chest against his pay. Nowadays all the clothing issued to the men, by the Victualling Yards, is of the finest quality. The generosity of the public in sending knitted garments of all sorts makes a huge difference. Oilskins cannot be beaten for keeping out the keenest of wind. Finally, the men on cold-weather work are provided with "duffle," or "fearnought," coats, made of fawn-coloured felt of fearsome thickness.

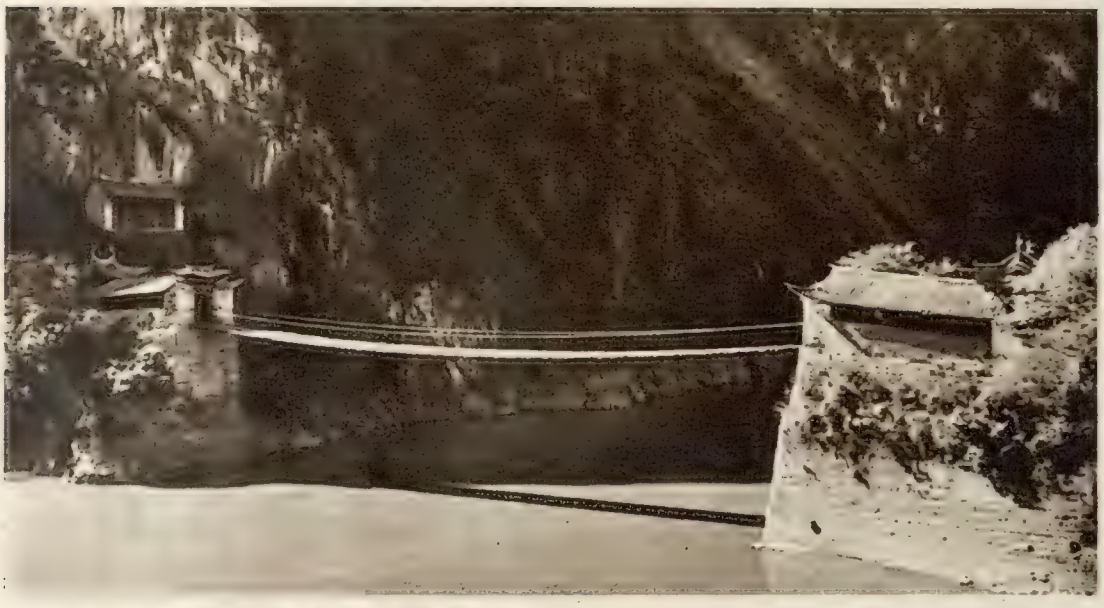
Drawings by Montague Dawson

in really cold weather. The faster she steams the worse it is, even in low latitudes, and much of the Navy's work has to be done well up into the Arctic." In the winter life on a destroyer can be very arduous—although, at the best of times, it is not too comfortable, what with the cramped quarters and the high speed of these vessels. The men of the destroyers are a very hardy breed!

THE FAMOUS BURMA ROAD Now Open to Traffic

Pictured by Patrick Fitzgerald

THE GORGE OF THE MEKONG RIVER, ONE OF THE MOST FORMIDABLE OBSTACLES WHICH THE ENGINEERS OF THE BURMA ROAD HAD TO NEGOTIATE : From the new road one can see the old pack-horse road as it winds its way down to the river. The cliffs at this point are almost vertical



BUILT IN THE EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY BY CHINESE OFFICIALS : All along the Burma Road these evidences of early Chinese efforts towards scientific bridge-building are evident to the traveller. This bridge, still usable, is supported on iron chains wrought in the district ; they would have been too heavy to carry from a distance

A STRENGTHENED BRIDGE OF THIS PATTERN CARRIES THE NEW ROAD : A large number of new bridges had to be constructed to carry the new road, but at various points it was possible to use the bridges so cleverly constructed by the builders of an earlier age. The Salween is crossed by a bridge like this, with additional steel cables to strengthen it for motor traffic. This bridge lies between Pao Shan and Teng Yueh and is a very vital spot on the Highway which connects the very heart of China with the outside world

PAGODA AND LAKE PAVILION AT PAO SHAN, THE LARGEST TOWN BETWEEN MANDALAY AND KUNMING : This ancient city, which lies on the track of the Burma Road, was visited by Marco Polo, who calls it Voo Chan. To-day it is the home of Chinese immigrants from the Nanking area, and is celebrated in West Yunnan for its cooking

The Burma-Yunnan Highway, or, more shortly, the Burma Road, is once again busy with motor traffic conveying stores of all kinds to Kunming, where it meets the internal roadway system of China. From Kunming the lorries proceed to Chungking, the capital of the undefeated Chinese Government. The road and the extraordinary country through which it runs were recently described in detail by Mr. Patrick Fitzgerald, some of whose photographs, taken when journeying along the new road, are here reproduced. Although a part of the route from the capital to Bhamo on the Irrawaddy was built before the war with China, the essential link, now known briefly as the Burma Road, was not begun until the late autumn of 1937. In December 1938 the first convoy of munitions passed up the new road from Bhamo, an eloquent testimony to what can be done over such a seemingly impossible route when a nation is really stirred towards the accomplishment of a pressing task. Much of the work was done by local labour with a minimum of mechanical aid and in some places with none. The eastern part of the route was not so difficult as the western. An open heath country was traversed, but by the time the traveller had passed the first quarter of the route, hairpin methods of descent and ascent from gorges began to be evident. The lorry-drivers do not diverge from their set route to Yung Ping and Pao Shan, the latter a really large city—a rare occurrence on the route of the Burma Road. In this western area, the awe-inspiring gorges of the great north and south rivers, the Mekong and the Salween, had to be negotiated by diversions in order to reach points at which it was possible to make a descent to a new bridge. It is impossible to magnify the difficulties of travel in this particular part of the globe, and it is therefore of great interest to observe how the Chinese Government of five or six centuries ago threw bridges across gorge-lined rivers when knowledge of stresses and so forth must have been very limited. Mr. Fitzgerald pictured several of these remarkable bridges, one of which is in use to-day, with strengthened cables, admitting of the passage of laden lorries

THE MIDWAY POINT BETWEEN BURMA AND KUNMING IS AT HSIA KUAN : Hsia Kuan was once a prosperous caravan town ; it may now regain some measure of its former status. At the moment this ancient fortress is a repair depot for motor traffic using the new road

THE R.A.F. ATTACK VALONA

THE JETTY AT VALONA, SHOWING ITALIAN SHIPPING ALONGSIDE THE PIER AND IN THE ROADSTEAD, BEFORE THE COMING OF THE R.A.F. BOMBERS

THE SAME SCENE AT THE MOMENT THAT THE BOMBERS GOT TO WORK: DIRECT HITS ARE BEING SCORED ON THE OBJECTIVES

The Royal Air Force has given, and is giving, considerable support to the Greeks in their resistance to the Italian effort in Albania—not only by bombing troops at the front, but also by pounding at the Italian bases and harbours. R.A.F. bombers have persistently attacked aerodromes used by the Italians on both sides of the Adriatic, and the ports of entry in Albania—Valona and Durazzo, in particular—have received a very heavy pounding. The two pictures above, just released by the Air Ministry, show the results of just one recent raid on the former port; the picture on the left shows the jetty at Valona, with supply ships alongside, before the attack began: that on the right shows the actual attack in progress. The deadly accuracy of the bombing crews is well demonstrated here—direct hits are being registered on the very difficult target, whilst other bombs are seen bursting a short distance inland

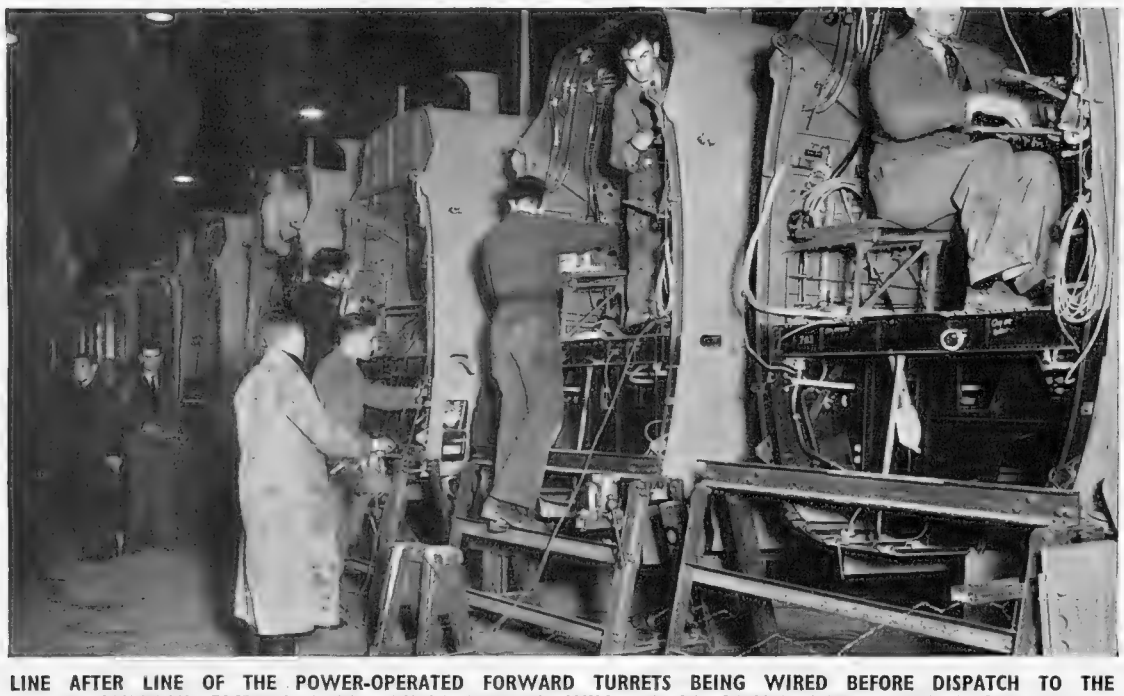
THE *LUFTWAFFE'S* FLOATING "REFUGES"

AN OVERHEAD VIEW OF THE WASHED-UP NAZI BUOY, USED AS A REFUGE FOR GERMAN AIRMEN SHOT DOWN IN THE CHANNEL

WITH THE RED CROSS PAINTED ON THE EXTERIOR: ANOTHER VIEW OF THE "LUFTWAFFE'S" REFUGE-BUOY FOR GERMAN AIRMEN

It was reported a few weeks ago that the Germans had erected a number of refuge-buoys in the English Channel close to the coast of Northern France. This was presumed to be for the purpose of conserving German pilots shot down over the Channel—the wastage in which is a matter of great concern to the enemy. One of these refuges has now been washed up on the South-East Coast and has thus afforded the R.A.F. an opportunity of inspecting it thoroughly. The refuge-buoy had been torn from its moorings by heavy seas in the Channel, and the tide had washed it up on our shores. In appearance it is like the conning-tower of a submarine, with a ladder up the side and the entrance at the top. Inside there are four bunks for the airmen to rest in whilst awaiting rescue, and various equipment and first-aid outfits

A GENERAL VIEW INSIDE THE ELECTRICIANS' SHOP, WHERE ALL THE ELECTRICAL WORK IS CARRIED OUT ON THE HUGE BOMBERS. SCORES OF THEM ARE SEEN HERE, ALL NEARING COMPLETION



LINE AFTER LINE OF THE POWER-OPERATED FORWARD TURRETS BEING WIRED BEFORE DISPATCH TO THE MAIN ASSEMBLY FACTORY. SOON THESE TURRETS WILL BE IN ACTION OVER GERMANY AND ITALY

BOMBER PRODUCTION—A Scene in the Spar Shop Where the Wings, 90 ft. long, are Made. Lord Beaverbrook, Minister for Aircraft Production during his recent broadcast, gave the news of how the workpeople in our factories have increased our strength in planes of all types in face of our losses in battle, and that we must now have more bombers. Workers in the factories of Great Britain are working day and night in the production of these. Women, too, are playing a great part in this work. The pictures given on these pages were all taken at a factory in Northern England.

AIR COMMENTARY—By C. G. GREY
(Founder of "The Aeroplane")

GOOD RESOLUTIONS THAT MIGHT BE

At this Turn of the Year here are a Few Ideas which Might Profitably be Considered by Those in High Places

BEFORE starting a New Year one is supposed to make Good Resolutions. That is a bad habit, because Good Resolutions are always the first casualties of the year; just as the first casualties in any war are The Truth and a sense of the value of life, man-hours and wealth. So let us not make any resolutions, but be content merely with making a catalogue of things which we ought to do in this coming year, 1941.

(A) Let us win the war.—Well, we shall do it in good time, but Mr. Churchill has told us to prepare for war economy and so forth in 1943-44, so we can leave that out of our 1941 catalogue, and be content with considering things which will help to win the war.

(B) Let us conserve our food supplies.—That does not sound as if it had anything to do with aviation, does it? But it has much. First of all, there is that matter of our ocean patrols, especially of the Atlantic sea-lanes, along which comes so much of our war material—although we may not import California lemons, but may only convoy them for the use of the Eirish, in whisky punch.

Let me say again that if we had the firmness of courage or enterprise to adopt Lough Swilly and Berehaven we could work our flying-boat patrols 300 miles or more farther out into the Atlantic than we can at present, so that they could meet patrols from Newfoundland, and we could reinforce them by lateral patrols from our new aircraft-carriers, which would keep enemy commerce-raiders and submarines so far from the steamship lanes by day that they could not reach them by night.

Working from our West African aerodromes, such as that at Bathurst, in the Gambia, we could annul anything that the Germans could do from Dakar. And there is nothing to show that the enemy are using or intend to use Dakar, in spite of all that alarmists have written about it.

But apart from all that, which is obvious, would you believe that the Air Ministry, on the advice of its "experts," is deliberately depriving this country of some hundreds of thousands of *tons* of cattle-feed each year?—That is quite a lot now that the meat ration is being reduced.

This is why.—From every acre of aerodrome grass a ton of grass meal can be got each year by drying the grass, which has to be cut every few weeks so that it may not grow long enough to tangle up in the undercarriages of aeroplanes when taking off or landing. The idea is new—only four or five years old. That is why the experts have not grasped it yet.

It was first tried by the Northamptonshire Aero Club—which is no official secret, for lots have been written and published about it. That aerodrome has for several years produced each year 200 tons of cattle feed off 200 acres mowed. At first farmers would not use the dried grass, just as forty years ago they would not believe in ensilage—lots of English farmers still do not, but all Scottish farmers do; and look at Scottish beef. Then makers of cattle-cake began to buy it to mix with imported linseed and now the Club could sell any quantity of it.

Two or three years ago the people who do the grass-cutting and drying were allowed to build drying plants on three R.A.F. aerodromes, and still the

demand was bigger than the supply. And there, too, the crop kept steadily round about a ton an acre. Moreover, remember that this is a by-product, which would otherwise be wasted, for the R.A.F. cannot let the grass grow long enough to be cut and sun-dried as hay.

Apart from which, kiln-dried grass shows by analysis a higher feed value than either hay or ensilage.

Now the R.A.F. have closed down the grass-drying plants on their aerodromes, and have refused to allow any grass-drying on any aerodrome. The reasons given are (*a*) that cutting and lifting the grass, instead of letting it lie and rot, impoverishes the roots of the turf, and (*b*) that the grass-cutting machines interfere with operations on the aerodrome, because aeroplanes might hit them when taking off or might land on them when coming in.

Both claims are sheer rot. Northampton, as I know, has particularly good turf—at every third or fourth cutting the grass is allowed to lie and form a mulch (forgive me for being horticultural). And Northampton, which for years has been an elementary flying school, has always had thirty or forty training machines buzzing round, piloted by pupils, all day long—which is far more dangerous than are the conditions at any war station. None so far has sat on a mower, but I know of several operational stations where people have crashed, and some have been killed, by hitting the local steam-roller, or tank-waggon, or other aeroplanes on the ground.

In the interests of our food supplies, our Grow More Food movement, our cattle production and all the rest, every acre of every aerodrome, ought to be producing its ton of cattle-feed each year. Besides that, all the waste ground round every aerodrome, on which no aeroplane ever rolls, but which must be kept clear of trees, fences and such, to give a take-off and an approach free of obstructions, ought to be cultivated. Much of it is first-class corn country, which would grow wheat, oats, and barley. The rest would grow vegetables.

And the Air Ministry experts are robbing us of all that food supply just because they hate being told or taught something which they had not the intelligence to discover for themselves. Queer, isn't it, when you think of all the people in the R.A.F. who risk their lives day after day in escorting our food convoys over dangerous seas in the foulest weather. The scandal is as gross as is the neglect in the past to provide better aeroplanes for our R.A.F. men.

(C) Here is another Good Resolution. Let us provide better aeroplanes for the pilots and crews who have already saved this country from invasion by sea and by air, and, in spite of not yet having enough of the right equipment, have cut down quite a lot of the damage done by enemy bombers at night, as well as by day.

Why are all Germany's high-speed Messerschmitt fighters built with slats and slots, to give them slower landing and a shorter take-off, when ours are not? Mr. Handley Page introduced slots—he does not claim to be the inventor—in 1920. They have proved their value as a safety device for 20 years. Herr Doktor Lachmann patented them in Germany at about the same time, and, as the German Aircraft Industry was then down and out, he joined Handley Page. For nearly twenty years he has worked in this country with the H.P. technical staff on improving slots. The Handley Page Hampden, a heavy bomber which is unsurpassed for efficiency, is the result.

Doctor Lachmann is interned as an enemy alien; the slots help our bombers. They also help German high-speed fighters to land safely, but not our fighters. Why?

(D) The Germans have given up using carburettors on their aero-motors. The twelve-cylinder Vee-type Daimler-Benz, and Junkers, use direct-injection fuel-pumps, so do the B.M.W. and other radials. They cannot freeze-up or snow-up. They do not surge when thrown about or flown upside down, and make the engines splutter and stop so that the pilots have to dive to make them start again, while the direct-injection enemy goes happily on his way.

The more knowledgeable pilots in the R.A.F. and real engineers in the Ministry of Aircraft Production know all about the advantages of direct-injection. We have talked about it and read papers about it for years. Why do we leave our pilots at a disadvantage with carburettors which weigh more, cost more, take up more room, and are a danger to the users?

(E) While we are thinking about giving our people better and safer aeroplanes, I hope that before long our technical and operational experts will awake to the fallacy of the multi-motor, many-manned big bomber, of which the American "Flying Fortress" is the prototype. The backers of the type say that these things will fly so high that neither guns nor fighters can reach them. They talk of the Boeing "Stratoliner" which is to fly in the sub-stratosphere, wherever that may be. "Shootaliner" seems to me to be a better name for it.

Some of my young friends in fighters tell me of being dived upon by super-hotted Messerschmitts or Heinkels when cruising peacefully at something between 35,000 and 40,000 ft. Can the Germans have developed a special type to carry war into the sub-stratosphere? And are they training pilots for the job? These new superchargers on the Daimler-Benz and Junkers motors look like it.

Incidentally, being in the compression-cabin of a sub-stratosphere bomber which was hit by a 37-millimetre cannon-shell would be rather like being on the suction side of the blast from a land-mine—everything, including the insides of the crew, would be exhausted at once.

(F) Another Good Thing we might do, which I have mentioned before, would be to have a lot of our aeroplanes made in India. I return to the subject because I have just met in an Australian newspaper called *Air Log*, which I know to be truthful, an account of a visit to the United States by a mission from India.

According to this story, Sir David Meek, the Director of Indian Commercial Intelligence, and a Military Mission headed by Brig.-General Tute, was in New York last August arranging for the building of a factory, and the supply of machine tools to equip it, at Rangoon, in Burma. Their idea, I gather, was to build the Curtiss Hawk, a fighter monoplane which did well for the French *Armée de l'Air* until the French Army collapsed. The Hawk is not half armed according to our ideas, but it is a good aeroplane.

That, coupled with the scheme, which I discussed a few weeks ago, for making aeroplanes of British design near Calcutta, emphasises the possibility of keeping British money in the British Empire instead of spending it in America. Or is it that we would rather owe it to the big financiers in the States than to our own Dominions?

The American hold on the British Empire may have to do with another statement in my Australian friend's paper which says that British makers of aeroplanes have tried to set up factories in Australia, where an aircraft factory in which great American motor-car interests are concerned has had the backing of the Australian Government. The British aircraft makers, according to *Air Log*, "were as good as told that they were not only not wanted, but that they would not be encouraged in any way to open up here."

So now we know, or ought to do so.

(G) Another good idea comes to me from a friend in Trinidad, a war-pilot of 1914-18, and now helping in the good work which those two air enthusiasts, Sir Hubert and Lady Young—who governed Nyassaland and Northern Rhodesia so successfully and made them so air-minded—are doing in the West Indies. He suggests that all the American war-planes which we buy, and are fit for war, not merely for training, should be sent to the Middle and Far East, and that our own newest and best types should be kept for the primary and decisive war area in Western Europe.

His argument is that from California to Singapore, India, Iraq, and Egypt the machines would have a more peaceful passage than across the Atlantic to England—which is sound sense. And so we should not be likely to lose so many.

Also, if the Middle and Far East used American aeroplanes, standardisation of spare parts and repair material would be simpler. And, anyhow, the American aeroplanes, if not good enough to fight Germany's best would be quite able to tackle anything Italy could provide, or that Germany would be likely to send down there, or that any possible Oriental enemy might, later on, turn loose on us.

I present my friend's idea to a traditionally ungrateful country. It is so sensible that it cannot possibly be used. And all the other alphabetically labelled subjects in this article are only likely to be, for a long time, in the category of New Year's Good Resolutions.

GIRLS PLAY A LARGE PART IN OUR AIRCRAFT FACTORIES—ESPECIALLY IN THE PRODUCTION OF SMALL COMPONENT PARTS FOR THE HEAVY BOMBERS

A WOMAN AIRCRAFT WORKER ENGAGED ON THE TASK OF DOPING THE WING OF A HEAVY BOMBER

On right—
SOME OF THE GIRLS WHO ARE HELPING TO BUILD BOMBERS TALK TO A TEST PILOT, AS HE LEAVES THE PLANE AFTER ITS FIRST FLIGHT

"THE GREYHOUND

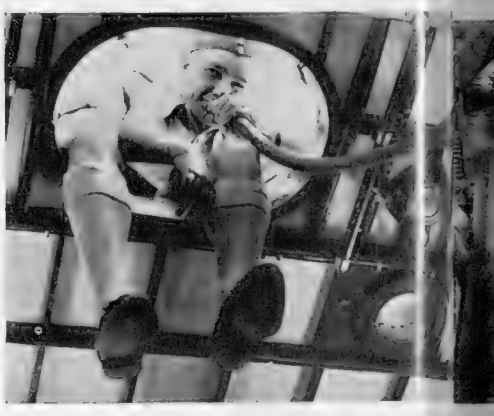
The Mosquito Craft Now Being Used

A HIGH-SPEED LAUNCH USED BY THE R.A.F. FOR RESCUE WORK IN OPEN SEAS: THESE VESSELS ARE ARMED WITH LEWIS GUNS AMIDSHIPS AND AFT, AND THEY ARE USED TO RESCUE AIRCRAFT PERSONNEL SHOT DOWN OVER THE CHANNEL AND NORTH SEA

ALMOST DANCING OUT OF THE WATER: ONE ... TRAVELLING AT GREAT SP...

A MOTOR TORPEDO-BOAT ON PATROL AT HIGH SPEED. WHEN GOING ALL OUT THESE SMALL CRAFT ARE ALMOST LOST IN A SMOTHER OF FOAM. VESSELS OF THIS TYPE HAVE BEEN USED OFF THE DUTCH AND GERMAN COASTS

AN R.A.F. LAUNCH ON SERVICE IN THE MID... valuable work in all theatres of war is the H... operate are fitted with radio, medical and ... saving a number of lives—enemy, as we...



THE CAPTAIN OF AN R.A.F. LAUNCH GIVE... ORDERS TO THE HELMSMAN THROUGH TH... SPEAKING-TUBE. HIS FEET ARE IN TH... CABIN, BUT HIS HEAD IS ON THE BRIDGE

ONE OF THE NEW 63-FT. HIGH-SPEED LAUNCHES BUILT BY THE BRITISH POWER BOAT COMPANY FOR RESCUE WORK BY THE R.A.F. NOTE THE GUN TURRET ABOVE THE BRIDGE

THE M.T.B.'S TELEGRAPHIST WORKS IN A WI... LESS ROOM NO LARGER THAN A CUPBOA... DETAILS OF HIS SET ARE SECRET

The Motor Torpedo-Boat is coming more and more into the news: "The Greyhounds of the Fleet" they have been called in the Navy. And well they have been living up to their name—with their daring, high-speed raids on enemy shipping along the Dutch and German coasts. The R.A.F., too, have quite a surprising number of high-speed craft—built for a variety of purposes. The pictures reproduced on these pages show some of these mosquito craft in action whilst engaged in their many and varied duties

OF THE FLEET"—
he Royal Navy and the R.A.F.

HE MOTOR TORPEDO-BOATS OF THE ROYAL NAVY WHILST ON PATROL DUTY

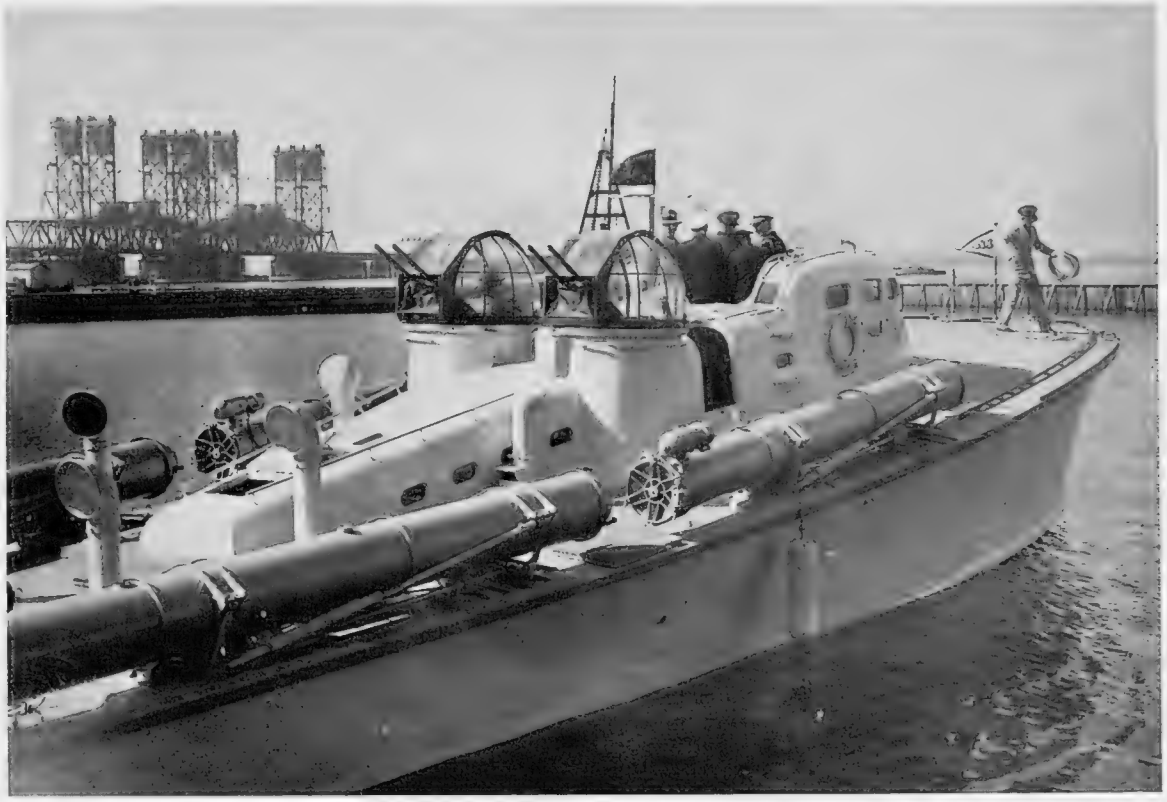
AST: One branch of the R.A.F. which is doing peed Launch Section. The launches which they ving apparatus. They have been the means of ritish—when aircraft have been shot or forced down

A PETTY OFFICER (LEFT), THE CHIEF MECHANIC, AND ANOTHER PETTY OFFICER WAITING IN THE ENGINE-ROOM OF A MOTOR TORPEDO-BOAT FOR THE ORDER TO START

THE SKIPPER (LEFT) AND NO. 1 IN THEIR TINY WARDROOM ON THE M.T.B., WHERE EVERY INCH OF SPACE IS UTILISED

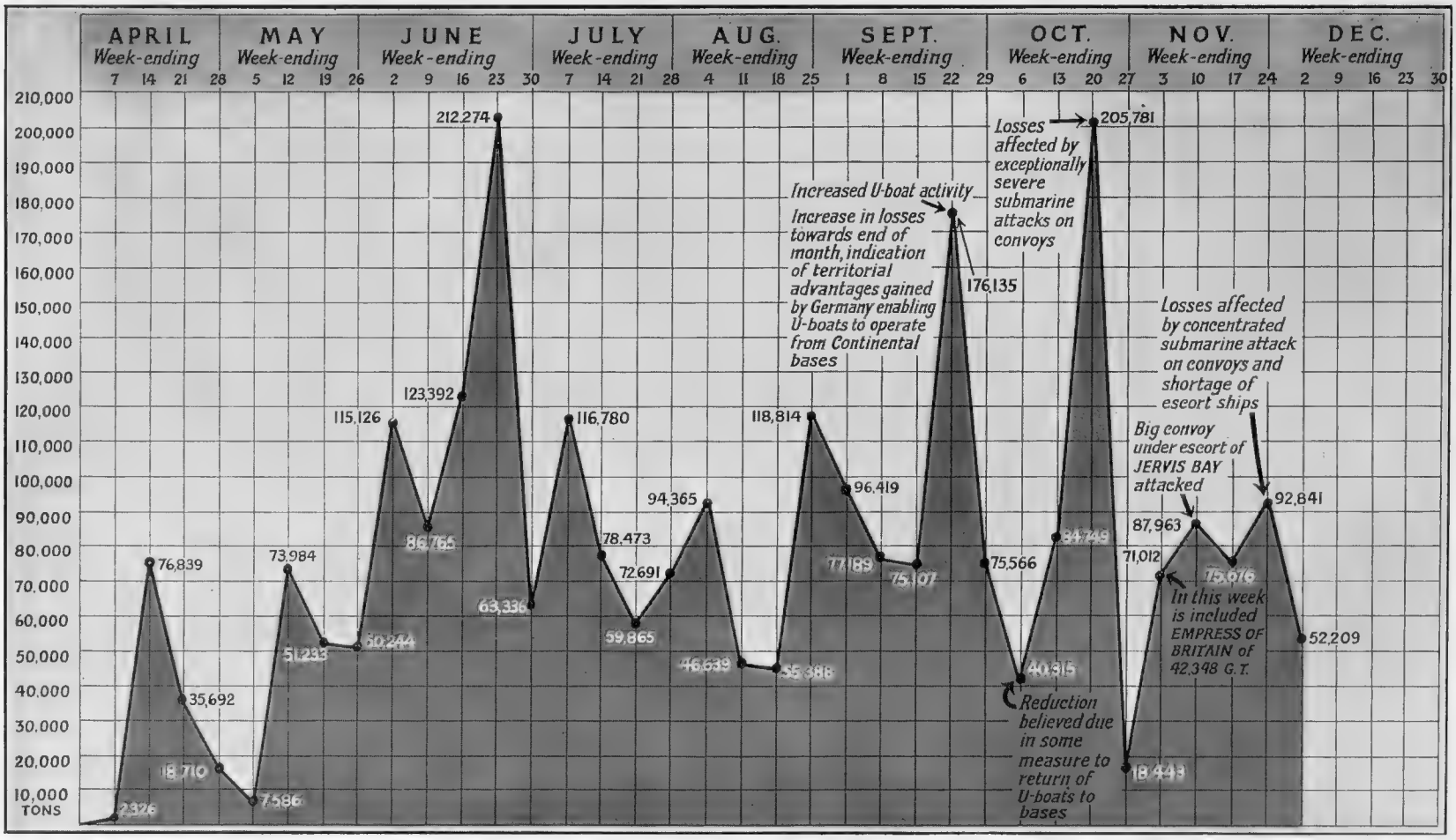
OTHER USEFUL TYPES OF THE SMALL CRAFT NOW BEING EMPLOYED BY VARIOUS BRANCHES OF THE R.A.F.—A PINNACE FOR TOWAGE WORK AND A SEAPLANE TENDER PUTTING OUT FOR DUTY

—AND TWO NEW IDEAS FROM AMERICA



A NEW 60-M.P.H. TORPEDO-BOAT IN THE UNITED STATES: The slick, efficient-appearing craft in this picture is the new U.S. Motor Torpedo-Boat, designed for a speed on water of 60 m.p.h. Note how every spare inch of space has been accounted for with torpedo-tubes or gun-turrets, and the general streamlined aspect of the ship. When this picture was taken the U.S. Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Frank Knox (extreme left of group), was aboard, en route for a visit across Newark Bay to the Federal Shipbuilding Corps

A SWIMMING TANK FOR THE UNITED STATES NAVY: The latest addition to United States naval equipment is a "swimming tank" which has just passed a series of successful tests. This low, flat, amphibious tank is said to swim at 10 m.p.h. and to travel over rough ground at 25 m.p.h. During trials in Florida it carried two tons of concrete and ten men safely up and down shore waters and, on reaching land, swept trees up to 8 ins. in diameter from its path. The inventor has offered it to the U.S. Marine Company's Yards



WHAT THE BRITISH AND ALLIED MERCHANT SERVICES HAVE SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF THE GERMAN U-BOATS: A GRAPHIC PRESENTATION, WHICH SHOWS LOSSES SUSTAINED AT SEA DURING THE PAST NINE MONTHS

THE GERMAN ATTACK ON BRITISH SHIPPING

A Detailed Analysis of the Very Serious Situation Brought About by the Enemy's Attacks at Sea

THE very serious losses of merchant ships by enemy action, interesting every person in the country by reducing the tonnage space available for the importation of foodstuffs and luxury commodities, have been given very serious notice by Mr. Ronald Cross, the Minister of Shipping, and Mr. Greenwood, Minister without Portfolio. There is no reason why they should be any surprise to the general public, for they have been honestly reported since the beginning of the war, but figures given week by week are apt to become mechanical and not to be given proper attention, although it is difficult to see what more the authorities can do to inform the public.

At the very beginning of the war the Admiralty, having learned since the end of the last war how the Germans had studied the losses of their own submarines to good purpose, decided to keep secret our successes against the U-boats except in very general terms which gave nothing away. This policy has been followed ever since, and there is no reason to believe that it has not been completely successful in its purpose. The Germans naturally know when their boats do not return, but by the time they have given them up their actual loss is probably long past, and without details to go upon it is very difficult for them even to guess at the manner of their end, although no doubt the collapse of France cleared up many mysteries for them.

In the case of merchant ships lost by enemy action, the Admiralty's policy has changed. In the early days they did not publish official figures, but allowed the Press to give the public full details, including names, provided they did not give away useful information. Apparently it was discovered that the enemy were gaining by this practice, for definite news was suddenly banned, and instead the Admiralty released official figures of the number of ships and their tonnage sunk by enemy action week by week, but they deliberately maintain a "time-lag" to prevent the figures helping the attackers. A careful register of next-of-kin and genuinely interested parties is kept, and official information is sent to them personally as soon as the facts are ascertained, which may not be for some days owing to the necessity of wireless silence.

The unofficial figures of the early days, added to the official weekly totals since the change of policy, give a very good idea of the tonnage sunk by the enemy. It cannot be guaranteed to a ship or a thousand tons, because one or two ships may have been missed during the unofficial period, but there were certainly not many of them, as the official summary given in Parliament tallies almost exactly. Another possible source of error—on the right side—is the success of the Salvage Section in recovering and returning to service ships which appeared to be total losses and which were returned as such.

The ships sunk are divided into three classes—British, Allied and Neutral. The last two have had to be changed to changing conditions as the war has progressed. In the early calculations Norwegian, Dutch, Belgian and Greek ships were classed as neutrals; the Norwegians were transferred to the Allied class as from April 9, the Dutch and Belgian from May 10, and the Greek from October 28, with the exception of Greek ships time-chartered to neutral countries (Switzerland, for instance) which are still regarded as neutrals.

From the outbreak of war until Sunday, December 1 the figures for these three classes were: British, 593 ships of 2,487,657 tons gross; Allied, 150 ships of 649,987 tons gross; Neutral, 285 ships of 886,826 tons gross. The grand total was 1,028 ships of 4,024,470 tons.

This total is serious enough, but as it is known that Germany was reckoning on sinking 2,000,000 tons of Allied and neutral shipping in the first month of the war, every available submarine having been put into position before Poland was violated, in spite of Hitler's personal assurance that Germany would observe the laws of war with special reference to the prohibition of submarines against merchant ships, it has been a very bitter disappointment to the enemy.

The authorities at Berlin and Rome naturally know the facts, but they do not reveal them to their people. Figures which are palpably absurd are continually published. The wildest claims by submarine captains, always difficult to check as the captain is the only man who can see anything through the periscope, are accepted without question for propaganda and the award of decorations. Even they do not account for all the grotesque claims, which when added up, total more than all the shipping that we had at the outbreak of war and have acquired since. Where it is possible to compare a definite claim with known facts there seems to have been a deliberate juggling with tonnage figures.

There are two principal tonnages by measurement: the nett on which port dues, etc., are paid, and the gross, which is the universal method of comparing the size of merchant ships and the one always used in the British figures. By weight there are two other tonnages: the deadweight, which is the cargo, fuel and stores which will bring the ship down to her Plimsoll mark, and the displacement, normally used only for warships, which is the actual weight of the ship and her contents. By adding two of these together quite an imposing figure can be obtained. A ship of 7,000 tons gross which has a deadweight of 11,000 and a loaded displacement of 15,000 can be published as 26,000 tons, with a few odd tons added to make it look more probable.

British claims for enemy ships sunk are reckoned in a very different fashion. To the same date as the British losses, German ships and the ships of occupied countries employed by Germany amount to 60 of 268,642 tons captured and 70 ships of 383,997 tons sunk, many of them by their own crews. Twenty-nine Italian ships of 150,762 tons have been captured and 16 of 79,899 tons have been sunk. The enemy losses definitely proved are, therefore, 175 ships of 883,300 tons. In addition, 27 neutral ships of 44,190 tons have been sunk while under enemy control.

These are precise figures, each ship known by name without the least doubt of her being captured or sunk. In addition there are nearly a hundred German ships of roughly half-a-million tons and 27 Italian ships of 138,000 tons which are believed and are morally certain to have been sunk but which the Admiralty only claim under full reserve. An unknown number are also certain to have been destroyed by the minelaying activities of the Coastal Command aircraft, and in spite of an occasional escape many are definitely immobilised for the duration of the war in foreign ports

A GERMAN U-BOAT STARTS OUT ON ITS MISSION OF DESTRUCTION: This picture, which has just reached us by way of America, shows a U-boat in the North Sea being escorted through minefields laid by the Germans by two enemy destroyers as it sets out for its destination—probably the Atlantic. The destroyer crew in the foreground are taking their leave of the submarine as it proceeds to its task of destroying British merchantmen

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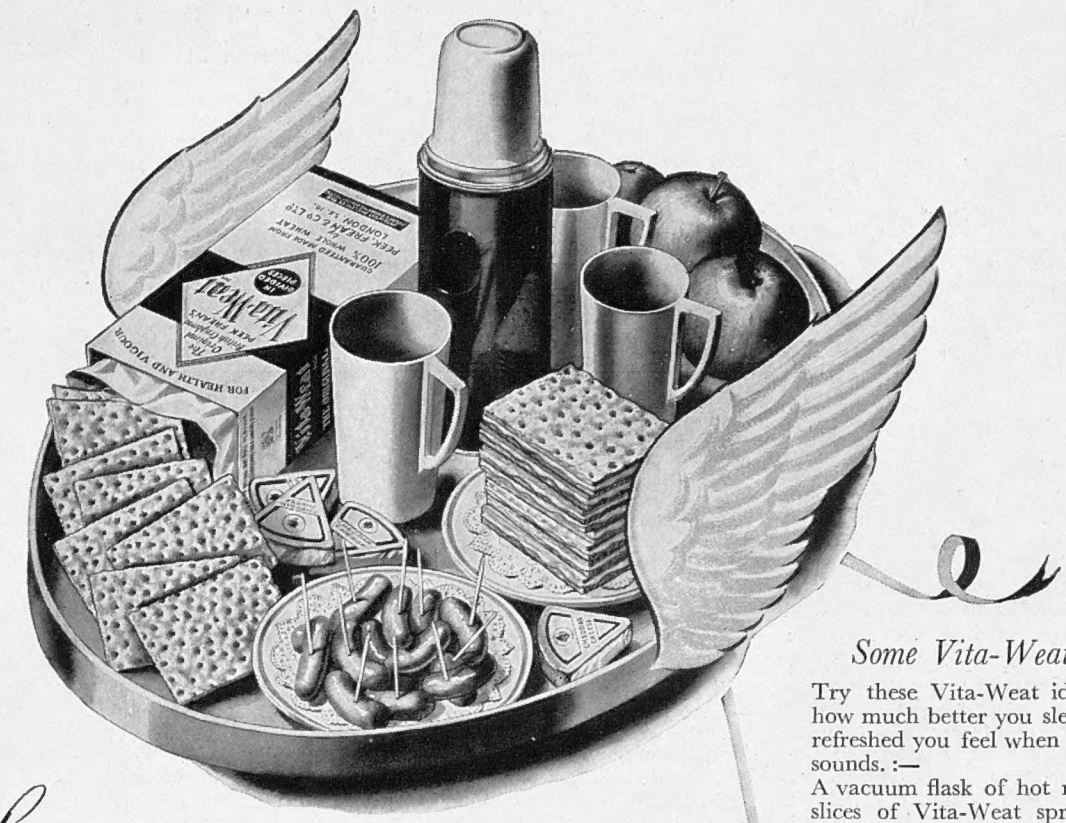

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The LONDON STAGE

By PHILIP PAGE

A WARTIME PANTOMIME IN LONDON: Miss Jean Colin as Aladdin and Miss Jane Corda as Princess So-Shi—Principal Boy and Princess at the London Coliseum

THE whirligig of war has brought back one theatrical fashion of the rather long ago—a single pantomime for central London. The suburbs then had pantos literally by the dozen; those at the Marlborough, Holloway; the Coronet, Notting Hill; the Kennington Theatre, and the King's, Hammersmith (and how many, alas! of these outlying theatres have become cinemas, or have vanished altogether?), were deservedly famous. But Drury Lane at Christmas-time was pantomimically the centre of the universe and, so far as the West End was concerned, reigned in solitary state. That honour has now been transferred to the Coliseum, which can certainly take it. For its *Aladdin* can rival and even transcend in magnificence, fun, and general essentials the most triumphant *Aladdins* of Old Drury's palmiest days.

After some months devoid of all theatre-going, except for a couple of visits to war-economy entertainments, very much on the economical side, I rejoiced naïvely to see scene after scene of costly elaboration and row after row of chorus girls, in pretty and obviously expensive costumes, and, I suspect, a pretty expensive cast; also to hear a full-size theatre orchestra, and an excellent one at that. Yet all this, though much to be desired, would not make a successful pantomime without plenty to make one laugh. There is much broad fooling, in the course of which the comedians knock each other about, Widow Twankey falls into a laundry-basket and vanishes, thanks to Abanazar, through a keyhole; two comic policemen are agilely comic; and amusingly topical songs, with a good swing about 'em, are sung and encored and encored again. That's the stuff. The success of this important department is due to Mr. Jerry Verno, Miss Iris Sadler (who reverses pantomime tradition as a female Twankey), Mr. Sutherland Felce (Abanazar), and Mr. Billy Purvis, who is one of the best stage "animals" I have seen.

Romance is amply provided by the charmingly insincere love-making of Aladdin (pretty Miss Jean Colin, who can sing and act) and the Princess (Miss Jane Corda). Sixteen Tiller Girls of exquisite grace contribute a ballet and much step-dancing, the latter of Brigade of Guards' precision.

"The Merry Wives of Windsor" (Strand).

—Mr. Donald Wolfit has most skilfully cut down Shakespeare's breeziest comedy to lunch-time-snack dimensions, mainly by cutting out the Sweet Ann Page scenes. Whether or no this is a pity depends, of course, on who plays Sweet Ann Page. What remains, however, is in my case of far more moment, particularly when Miss Irene and Miss Violet Vanbrugh play the "merry wives." Since it has, I notice, been stated more than once in the last week or two that this is the first time these two splendid actresses have appeared in Shakespeare, I take this opportunity of saying—nonsense. Miss Violet Vanbrugh played Ann Boleyn in Henry Irving's production of *Henry VIII* at the Lyceum. That was considerably before my time; but I cherish the pleasant memory of her Portia at Oxford, with her husband, the late Arthur Bourchier, as Shylock. It is, by the way, over forty years since the sisters appeared on the stage together in *The Chili Widow*, at the old Royalty Theatre.

THE RETURN OF THE DANCING TEAMS: The Tiller Girls in a dancing scena in the pantomime at the London Coliseum

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The Falstaff of *The Merry Wives* is just a clown of the broadest farce (unlike the monumental figure of *King Henry IV*). Quite rightly does Mr. Wolfit clown and fool away to the top of his bent, and is most genuinely amusing.

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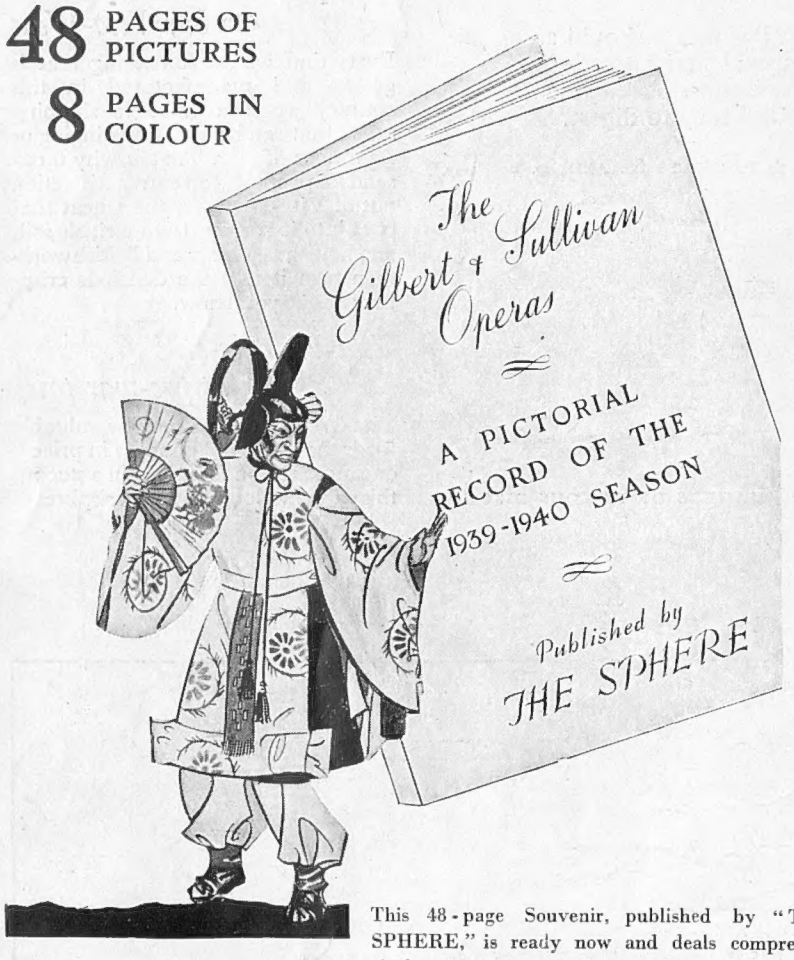

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In Quest of Good Hotels

By ASHLEY COURTENAY

THE hotel-seeking public are very sheeplike. They adhere to certain recognised pastures. Three-quarters of my inquiries refer to possible accommodation at Bath, Cheltenham, Oxford and the Cotswolds, Torquay, Paignton, and all that South Devon coast which stretches from Seaton to Dartmouth. But such places are already full, many of them uncomfortably so, and it will be to the good of the public and the hotel trade if I were this week to open a "gate" or two to pastures new where will be found plenty of room to eat—and sleep.

My first "gate" leads to Looe, in South Cornwall—as lovely a place as one could wish for—but simply unknown as a winter resort. It is surprising that Looe has been so unloquacious in proclaiming her charms in respect of winter and wartime residence. It may be that, like all good-looking ladies, she has been content to be courted. For years she has had her summer holiday admirers, and in winter, seeking respite, she has gone to sleep. Her shops are still filled with cheap finery to attract the day tripper who no longer exists, whilst her hotels in West Looe are mostly closed, though they could, in my opinion, be full if they were but to collectively push their wares.

Fortunately, one of Looe's best hotels—and an excellent one from a winter standpoint—the Boscarn, has recently reopened its doors, and very soon I prophesy it will be full. It has everything to commend itself to those seeking safe accommodation at a reasonable price. Built into the rock and facing south on Looe's sea-wall, it is a veritable sun-trap if ever there was one. But do not let me mislead you over this matter of sunshine. Looe is in England and the Boscarn has adopted defensive measures to combat any fickleness of climate. Central heating in all bedrooms, public rooms, and corridors. Such a large, open fire in the lounge that no two or three visitors can monopolise the fireplace. Gay flowers and furnishings to make for brightness, and at night-time there is no sense of blackout indoors. The Boscarn is under the same direction as the Dorset Square Hotel in London and those who have sampled Mrs. Burlingham's flair for hotel-keeping at Dorset Square will find a replica in the Boscarn at Looe. "The best of its kind in everything" would appear to be the motto of these admirably-run hotels. There is no stinting as regards food, light, or heat. There is no overcrowding in the public rooms, and one can get a well-lighted, comfortably furnished room from four guineas. If I can persuade you to sample this new pasture it may be that you will, like Mrs. Burlingham's principal staff, simply refuse to leave.

One other claim for the Boscarn is that the hotel is on the level, the shops are just around the corner, and Looe is a good centre for expeditions to such places as Fowey, Polperro and Downderry.

And now for another "gate." I write from an hotel I have mentioned before—the Budock Vean, on the Helford River. Nestling in the fold of the hills, I have for nearly a week been completely cut off from the sound of engines, be they aero, motor, or locomotive. The weather has been, to say the least of it, unfriendly, but we are snug—and well content. We are five miles from a town, and though there is a regular bus service we are not in the mood to use it. Why worry about changing our library book when we have a good library on the spot? Why force ourselves to walk out in the rain when we have a huge games room to keep our livers from getting too sluggish? In spite of limited outdoor exercise, each meal is a new delight. The rationed menus are full of pleasing surprises. Cornish cockles and Duchy oysters, potato cakes and pasties, chickens and ducks from nearby farms. Yes, we live in luxury from five guineas a week, knowing full well that in the height of the season we should expect to pay double for the same accommodation.

I am a little loth to open the "gate" too wide to the Budock Vean Hotel, in case it results in my being crowded out of one of my favourite pastures.

One more "gate," which, until recently, was locked by the authorities. The ban on visitors to Bournemouth has been lifted, and there is no need for me to proclaim Bournemouth as a winter resort. Nothing is going to deter me from seeing this bad old year out at the Bourne Hall Hotel, where Christmas and the New Year is ever an occasion. Bourne Hall is an admirable one for winter and wartime residence, because, apart from its warmth and the feeling of well-being, one is close to the shops, cinemas and within seven minutes' strolling distance of the sea front.

Canford Cliffs Hotel, Branksome Towers, the Royal Bath and many other small hotels are still open to give you a welcome. Many of these I shall hope to revisit at the New Year.

Mr. Ashley Courtenay is always pleased to advise "Sphere" readers of hotels, both large and small, known to him personally. Letters, accompanied by a 2½d. stamp for reply, should be addressed to him, c/o the Editor, THE SPHERE, *32-34, St. Bride Street, London, E.C.4. Personal and telephone inquiries, however, cannot be accepted.*

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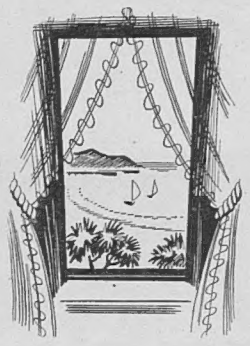

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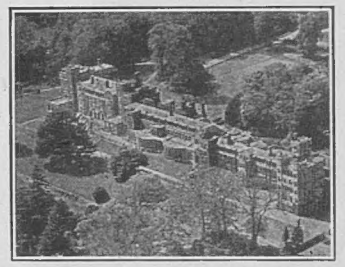

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